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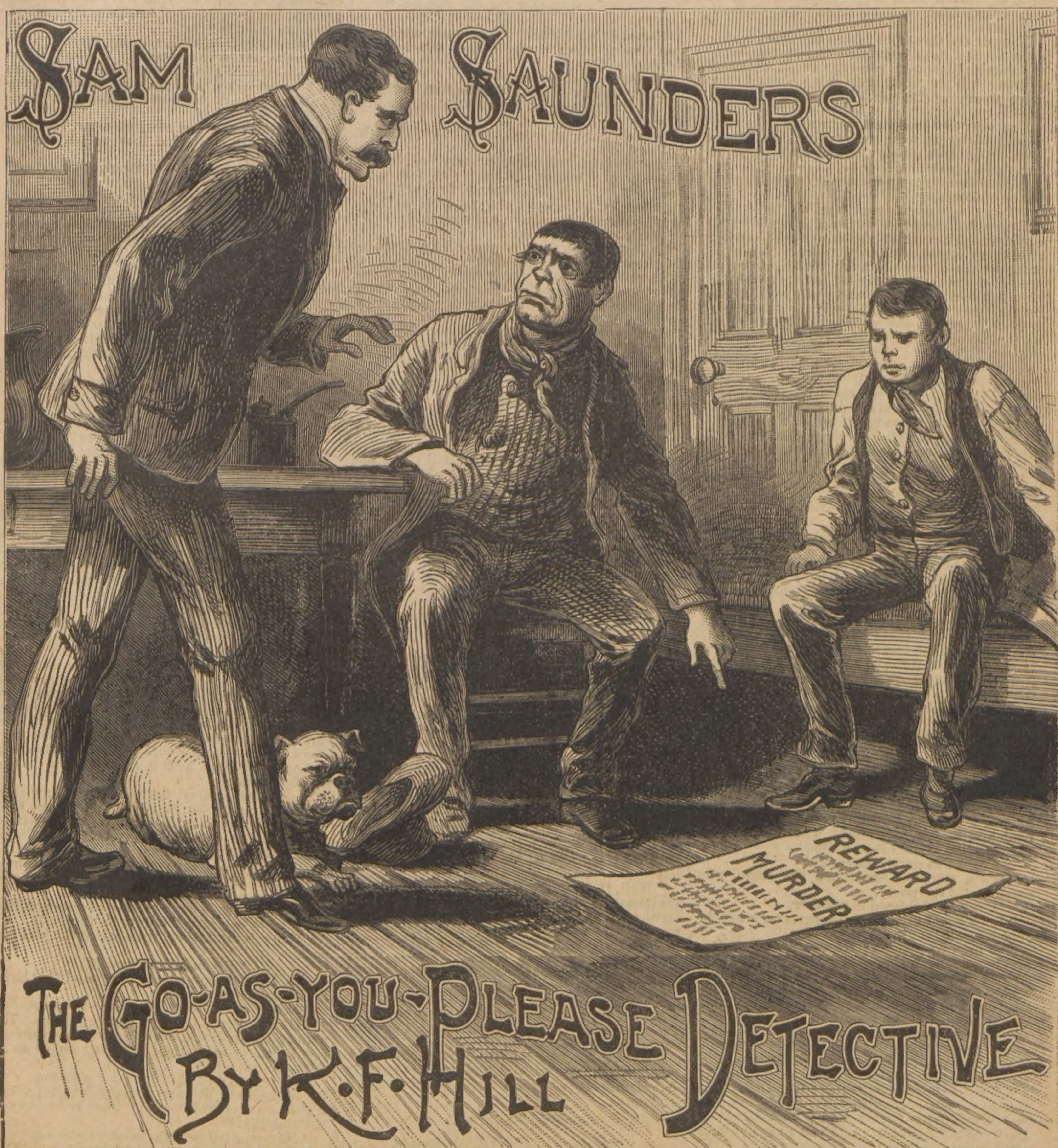
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"WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE?" "THAT'S WHAT BRINGS ME HERE," REPLIED THE MAN, AND HE UNROLLED A YELLOW POSTER AND SPREAD IT ON THE FLOOR.

Sam Saunders,

The Go-As-You-Please Detective;

OR,

HUNTED AROUND THE WORLD.

BY K. F. HILL,

AUTHOR OF "THE DUMB DETECTIVE," "THE TWIN DETECTIVES," "SARAH BROWN," "D; OR, BRANDED FOR LIFE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

A GHASTLY FREIGHT.

"A sail!"

The voice of the lookout roused the crew and passengers assembled on the deck of the steamer North Star, which was rapidly nearing the port of New York bound from Bremen. The voyage had been a somewhat long and stormy one, and the passengers, many of whom had been pent up in close state-rooms the whole time, were delighted by the sight of "land," albeit the land was but a dim dark misty stripe on the horizon under the white lamp of night, for a harvest moon overhung the tossing waves and myriads of stars shone out in the purple arch of heaven as if they wished to see with their own golden eyes the safe arrival of their namesake.

None of the throng of varied humanity which crowded the deck and caused the crew to mutter uncomplimentary remarks would think of retiring till the good ship cast anchor; they were weary of the sea and homesick for the land.

The very old men and women and the very young children were below, but the others were all on deck, though it was ten o'clock, or in nautical parlance, four bells.

"Whereaway?" shouted the captain in reply to the lookout.

"Two points on the port bow, sir."

The captain hastened forward, glass in hand, and descried a craft which seemed to be handled in a very unseamanlike manner. When he caught sight of her not a soul could be seen on board; she was a cat-rigged boat, apparently about fifteen feet long, and just as Captain Schon raised his glass to his eye, she unaccountably luffed up in the wind, and lay with her sails flapping helplessly directly in the steamer's course.

The loud, clear order, "Port helm!" sounded; a single stroke of the bell to the engine-room signaled: the speed of the ocean monarch slackened, and on the second signal of two strokes the mighty black hull gradually ceased to move.

A boat was quickly lowered, and a few swift strokes of the oars brought her alongside the mysterious craft.

What a sight met the horrified eyes of her crew!

The dead body of a man lay in an easy position in the bottom of the boat, his head resting on one of the thwarts and his hands clinched tightly beside him.

He had been dead for hours, perhaps for days, and the expression of his rigid, ghastly face showed that he had "died hard," as the saying goes. The body was that of a middle-aged man of peculiar appearance; his face was a high-bred one, the forehead broad and low, the brows arched and the open glazed eyes deep blue. The nose was a delicate aquiline, and the lips beautifully shaped, full and sensitive. Yet the face was not a good or trustworthy one.

The moonlight lay full on the dead face, and the terrified sailors began to search the boat for evidence of what they feared was a cruel murder.

A revolver lay under the thwart where the head of the corpse rested; four of the chambers were empty, the other two still loaded, and it was evident that the intention of the murderer or murderess was to impress the finder of the boat and its ghastly freight with the idea that the man had taken his own life.

The ruse was partly successful.

"It's a suicide," exclaimed the mate, who commanded the party.

"Of course," chimed in another.

"Look how he dropped the revolver when he shot himself."

One man was silent. He was a Scotchman, and he smoked his pipe and said nothing, but quietly moved to the stern of the boat and observed every trifling particular. He found that the tiller had been lashed so as to keep the craft off the wind; but the rope had parted, leaving frayed remnants still attached to the tiller, while the rest remained still fast to a ring-bolt.

The appearance of the boat, which appeared to be a pleasure craft, and the fine clothing on the body, seemed to indicate that the dead man was a person of wealth. His handsome gold watch was in his pocket, and a pocket-book in the breast of his coat contained over five hundred dollars. Otherwise it was empty.

If it had contained papers or other valuables they had been abstracted.

The sailors, simple-minded as seamen usually

are, accepted the theory of suicide; but the Scotchman was an exception. He had decided, in his own mind, that the man was the victim of a foul crime and as firmly believed that in that dead face he beheld a man of his own race—a Scotchman.

The body was taken on board the steamer amid the horrified exclamations of the passengers. The doctor attended to it, and surprised all on board, except Sandy McBain, by pronouncing his opinion that the man had been murdered.

The fatal wound, for there were three others, was one that severed an artery over the heart. The bullet had entered the man's back and passed out through his chest.

"No man ever shot himself in the back," said Doctor Steel, emphatically.

"No," replied one of the passengers who stood by while the doctor talked with the captain.

The latter turned around and eyed the speaker rather coldly. He was a dignified man, always, and did not approve of anything like forwardness or familiarity on the part of his passengers.

"Pardon me," said the stranger, "and permit me to introduce myself. I am also a doctor; here is my card."

The card read:

"DOCTOR FRANK HOWARD,

"Russell Square, London."

"Howard!" exclaimed the steamer surgeon; "not Frank Howard who walked the London Hospital in '64?"

"The same, and you are—?"

"Billy Steel, who went into the British Navy and left Portsmouth on board H. M. S. Sphinx in '69."

The two men grasped each other's hands cordially.

"An old friend of mine, captain," explained Doctor Steel, "and one of the best fellows who ever lived. How's the old aunt, Frank?"

He laughed as he asked the question, but his friend looked rather grave as he replied:

"Dead, three years ago."

"Indeed? Then there is no one for you to indite those touching appeals to."

The two old friends had strolled away from the captain, who was preoccupied, as seamen always are when their vessels are nearing a port.

"And no occasion to write them. My aunt left me her whole fortune. It amounts to over eight thousand pounds a year, and a pretty little estate in Cornwall."

"Lucky Frank! Well, my story is not so pleasant to tell. I am poor as ever. I suppose you travel for pleasure?"

"Not altogether. I came to the United States to look for an uncle and his family."

"Indeed? Have you not secured their address?"

"No; my aunt requested me to search for them, and I have advertised rather extensively, but have come to the conclusion that I must look for them myself. I have nothing to do, and may as well turn amateur detective as to waste my time in waiting."

The conversation then turned on the startling discovery of the murdered man in the boat.

"I am going to examine the craft," announced Steel, "and see if I can discover any clew to the mystery."

But no clew was found.

The body was landed and given into the custody of the coroner, who decided the case to be a mysterious one. An autopsy was held, and the result corroborated Doctor Steel's statement. At the inquest the jury decided that the murdered man "came to his death at the hands of some person or persons unknown."

A reward offered for any information concerning the crime awakened no response, and the boat contained no clew whereby the perpetrators could be traced.

So one more mysterious murder was added to the already long list of undiscovered crimes.

The two doctors attended the inquest, and Howard remarked to his friend Steel as they left:

"Well, if that crime remains a mystery, I shall have a poor opinion of American detectives. Here is a man, who evidently belonged to what is termed the 'higher classes,' shot dead and his body boldly sent adrift at the very entrance of New York Harbor. Surely there must be some means of tracing such a daring crime."

"You are right, sir," replied a stranger, who was near the two doctors as they passed from the close room to the freshness of the clear autumnal breeze.

"Excuse me," he added, drawing his card-case from his pocket and handing his card to Howard, who, with some surprise, glanced at it and read:

"SAM SAUNDERS,

"Formerly of Pinkerton's Agency."

"Ah! A detective?"

"A retired one," corrected Saunders.

"I've heard of your agency and the remarkable detective work it has done. So you think some clew to this remarkable crime could be found?"

"A clew to any crime can be found," replied Saunders, emphatically.

"Has no case ever baffled you?"

"I am not fond of boasting. Ask my former superior that question."

Howard eyed the man sharply. He was of small stature, but muscular; his face was clean-shaven and his features regular. His eyes were deep-set and very black, and his hair and complexion dark as an Indian's.

"I have come all the way from England to find a relative of mine who has been missing for thirty years," said Howard; "would you like to undertake the case?"

"Thirty years?"

"Yes; and the worst of the trouble is—he dropped his own name when he left England, as we have ascertained, and I have no idea what name he lived or died under."

"Pshaw! That is a tangle!"

"Yes, it certainly is. However, I mean to try and unravel the knot, and shall be glad of your assistance."

The detective reflected for a few moments.

"I believe I will have a try at it. I do not need to work, but the fact is I have been idle for nearly a year, and I'm about sick of it. I had a sort of half-notion of taking up this cat-boat murder case, but your story interests me greatly, and as a Go-As-You-Please Detective I will enter upon the trail."

"Call at my hotel this evening then, and we will make our arrangements. I admit I like your appearance and will be pleased to arrange for your services," and handing the detective his address, the doctor bowed politely and passed on.

Sam Saunders stood staring after the two gentlemen with a puzzled look on his shrewd face.

"Who does Doctor Frank Howard look like?" he said, musingly. "By jingo! I have it! He looks like the man who was shot in the cat-boat!"

He stood a moment as if cogitating; then turned and re-entered the room wherein still lay the body. Its fine face he studied with the evident purpose of impressing every feature upon his memory indelibly. Then, as if satisfied, he stepped again out upon the street.

"The resemblance is more than passing or accidental; it is the likeness of blood; I'll stake my reputation on it," and a settled purpose seemed to steal over Sam Saunders's intelligent face.

Had he a clew?

CHAPTER II.

HETTY.

"I SHA'N'T be contented—so there!"

The speaker stamped her little foot and clinched her tiny fists, while fire flashed from her great black eyes, and she looked like a diminutive fury.

A tall man stood regarding her somewhat anxiously.

The girl was little more than a child, but a child with a will of her own. She was beautiful—strangely so. Her eyes, brows and lashes were of ebony darkness, but her complexion was purely blonde, and her tumbled hair fell in masses like the mane of a lion—but, waving and tangled. Half-dried tears stood in her eyes, scorched up by the angry fire that burned there.

She was slim of form, and with tiny hands and feet. Her dress was picturesque, as if she had chosen it according to her own peculiar fancy. A black velvet robe fitted the lithe figure closely, and fell in full folds almost to the little bronze slippers; a wide crimson sash was carelessly knotted about the slender waist, and a bow of the same hue had fallen from the mass of burnished hair and lay unheeded upon the shabby carpet.

The man who stood before the child, with a half-frightened look, had a bad face—one that would have condemned him in any court of justice—a low-browed, heavy-featured villain. He was elegantly dressed and wore valuable jewels; but no earthly power could make him a gentleman—a fact he seemed to be aware of and to resent in a sullen way.

"Miss Hetty, what's the use of going on like this?" he asked, half-humbly, half-angrily.

"Where's my father?" demanded the girl imperatively.

"Don't I tell you I don't know?"

"He left here in your company and that hateful, slimy son of yours."

"Jasper ain't slimy," protested the man.

"He is! Don't dare to contradict me. I'm going to the police station to send out an alarm, for I believe my father has been made away with—murdered!"

"The man's dull red face grew crimson.

"Murdered!" he gasped, clutching the back of a chair to support himself; "what possesses you to think that?"

"He never before left me alone so long."

"Maybe he went away on business."

"If he did he would have told me. No, you went with him, and you must go to the police

station with me and tell the officers where you left him."

"And fine and mad he will be when he comes home and finds out what fools we have made of ourselves."

The small face grew pale and Hetty hesitated. "But why does he stay away so long?" she asked, petulantly.

"Because he is in trouble again."

"Is that true?"

The girl did not seem greatly surprised.

"Yes, and I think he went to Canada this time, so you see what good you would do by giving information at the police station. I guess they are looking out for him now."

"Ah! I hope not. That's what comes of keeping company with such men as you, Hank Notting!"

She spoke with bitter contempt, for detesting the man, she did not take the trouble to conceal her contempt for him.

Her father had long been a mystery to her. She knew he associated with bad men, but she had only suspicions to guide her.

Once before he had gone away and left her in the miserable boarding-house she called a home—the only home she had ever known.

On that occasion, however, his absence had been a short one, and he had not forgotten to send a dispatch notifying her, and also a sum of money to pay expenses. This time he had neglected to do either.

"I don't know what you mean, Hetty, by alluding to me in the way you do," said Notting, in an injured tone; "your father is an old friend of mine, and I don't believe he would like to hear you abuse me."

Hetty's lip curled and she turned away.

"He was away before, and you didn't kick then."

"Because he sent a telegram to tell me he was detained, and money for me to pay my board."

"As to that, he left money with me for you, and you may get the telegram at any moment. He may be traveling and won't telegraph until he gets to his journey's end."

"Why didn't you say so before, then?"

She was still far from reassured.

"Because you fly out so you make a man forget everything."

He counted out a roll of bills and laid them on the table, then took up his hat to go.

"I'll call again, Hetty," he remarked, "and by that time you may have some news of your father."

The girl did not reply; she had thrown herself into an easy-chair and was staring out the window with a sullen look on her youthful face.

Notting meanwhile hastened away to the nearest telegraph-station and sent off a long dispatch addressed—"Phil Burr, St. Paul, Minn."

He then took an up-town train, for the boarding-house where Hetty resided was on the east side of Fifteenth street, and his destination was near Harlem.

He walked a few blocks after leaving the train, and stopped before a neat cottage surrounded by a large garden in which some autumnal flowers still blossomed, though it was the end of October.

The door opened before he had time to use his latch-key, and an old woman appeared—a fat old woman with a round face and unctuous smile. At the first glance a stranger would be apt to think:

"What a kind, motherly old creature!" but a longer acquaintance with Mother Notting would dissipate that first impression. The small pale-gray eyes, almost buried in fat, wore the greenish glint of a serpent's cunning, and the long upper lip and upturned nose spoke of meanness, greed and avarice. Her smile and cheerful manner could be dropped in an instant, and the woman become, as quickly, a real virago. She was obstinate as a mule, and when once aroused or opposed, stopped at nothing to attain her object. A falsehood came as readily to her lips as her prayers, for this remarkable dame was a devoted attendant at church, and passed for an aged saint among strangers. In her domestic circle she was known as a petty tyrant, who grudged the very food which the members of her household consumed, and her cruelty was exceeded only by her cunning.

"Well, Henry!" exclaimed the amiable Hecate, addressing her son, "what's the news?"

"Nothing much, mother, only that Chamberlain's girl is kicking like a mad deer about her precious father."

"You must get her here, Henry; I'll soon quiet her down. You didn't tell her anything, I hope."

"Not me! We'll have to keep her in the dark till she's married to Jasper safe and sound."

"I'll soon make her glad to marry even one of Lucifer's imps if I get her into my clutches."

"I don't do it. Where's Jasper?"

"In the back parlor, lying down; he didn't come home till three o'clock."

"Did he do any good?"

"He did the best he could; he took the Night-hawk out and picked up a pair of pigeons. They wanted to go to the Grand Central, but

Jasper took them all over New York, and they had drinks at every place they stopped. My! how I laughed when he told me!"

"Yes, but what did he make?" persisted the fond father, impatiently.

"About one hundred, I believe."

"That ain't much out of such a racket as that."

The old lady omitted to mention that her grandson, who was her especial favorite, had divided his spoils with her. He had taken out an old hack which was kept in a stable on the premises, in company with a superannuated horse, and had picked up two belated travelers, who were none the better for having dined and wine too freely. He had, of course, succeeded in robbing them when he dragged them, drunk, from his cab.

Notting walked down the hall and threw open the back-parlor door.

His son Jasper lay on a lounge in a profound slumber, but his father unceremoniously awakened him.

The young man was not a prepossessing member of society. He was dark, and his skin and eyes were billious-looking; his sleek hair was very black and shiny, and his small eyes, set close together, were both restless and cunning.

"Lemme alone!" the young man growled.

"Wake up, you dunderhead, and listen to what I've got to say. Hetty's kicking, and talks about giving information to the police, and if she sees that a reward is offered, she may be fly enough to tumble."

"Well, what are you going to do?"

"I wired Phil Burr to send on a dispatch I sent him, and I'll call around when she gets it and bring her here."

"She won't come, the young wildcat!"

"Yes, she will, if the dispatch says her father is all right and wants her to go on a visit to his friends, the Nottings."

Jasper looked surprised, then sat up and rubbed his hands, chuckling, as he exclaimed:

"That's so; she'd go through fire and water to do what her dad told her to do."

"She'll be just as obedient to her husband when she gets one."

"She'd better, that's all!"

"You won't get another match like her, and I've got all the papers. She has only to claim the fortune, and we'll take care she does not do that till she is Mrs. Jasper Notting."

"There ain't any danger of some one coming over to look into things?"

"No fear. They could not connect the man Chamberlain, who was a gambler, with Rupert Herington, who left England thirty years ago."

"Perhaps not, but for the same reason won't we now have trouble to make it out ourselves?" asked the wily Jasper.

"Not at all. The papers I secured fix all that. Though his father died before the title came to him, the marriage registry and the son's birth, which was also registered, tells all the story, and the papers contain all the evidence. His father confided the papers to his son just before his death, and told him the whole story, so Chamberlain, or Herington, knew that both a fortune and title were coming some time to the family, but never suspected, till the day he—he disappeared that it was already his."

"You knew this, then, before—before—"

"Yes, I knew it. He told me all, and bragged about what an heiress his Hetty would be, and that's why I worked the racket as I did."

Jasper's yellow and black eyes glistened.

At this moment the interesting conversation was brought to a close by the entrance of a woman. A thin, pale, overworked creature who was the abject slave of the establishment—the wife of Hank Notting, and mother of the hopeful Jasper.

"There's a man outside who wants to see you, Jasper," she said, in a frightened tone, which showed how completely she was broken in spirit and heart.

"Who is it?"

"I can't tell—a man with a broken nose. He has a dog with him and mother would not let him in, for I've just washed up the oilcloth in the hall."

Her dutiful son, with a vicious "cursed stupidity!" hastened out to interview his friend, and soon returned with both man and dog, angrily bidding the terrified woman to "clear out," which she hastily did.

Behind this man with the broken nose there slouched a huge white bulldog, an under-bred, bandy-legged sample of that breed of brutes.

"Hallo, Rusty!" cried Hank Notting, looking by no means pleased at his visitor's advent.

"Hallo, guv'nor!" was the response, in a coarse voice.

"Rusty" sat down, while his dog companion crouched by his chair as the ruffian put his hat on the floor.

"What brings you here?"

"That's what brings me here," replied the man, and he unrolled a yellow poster and spread it on the floor.

Father and son started violently.

It was the announcement of the reward offered for the apprehension of the murderer of the

man whose dead body was found drifting out to sea in the cat-boat.

"You see, guv'nor, this body was found on the night of September 27th, and that is the date when you engaged my cat-boat."

"Pshaw, man! Is that the mare's-nest you've found? Your cat-boat capsized, and Jasper and I were picked up by a fishing-boat, or we would be at the bottom along with her."

The man looked doubtful for a moment.

"That's the story you told me," he said, slowly, "but it's the story I don't believe. I happened to come across this poster, and I came up from my little place to ask you what it means."

"I wish I knew," laughed Notting, "for then I'd go to the Mayor of New York and claim the reward."

"Maybe that's been done already," suggested Jasper. "It's more than three weeks since that body was found."

"They can't do it," exclaimed Rusty, excitedly—"they can't rob a honest man of his just jews, for they can't identify the cat-boat, an' I ken!"

"See here, Rusty," said the elder Notting, slowly and significantly, "if I were in your place I wouldn't be in too great a hurry to identify that cat-boat, for some one may take it into his head to mix you up with the murder."

"I don't see how that is," muttered the man, sulkily; but he looked daunted.

"You know best how you stand with the police authorities of New York," rejoined Notting, carelessly.

"Curse them! yes, they can't let a cove alone!"

"You are best at Seabright, my friend. Your cat-boat is paid for, and I may make you a present to repay you for the trouble of coming here."

"You paid for the boat honorable enough," grumbled Rusty, still looking far from satisfied.

"And I further propose to give you a handsome present, so don't trouble your head about anything else."

He handed a roll of bills to Rusty, who moistened his grimy thumb in his mouth and painfully counted them.

"Five hundred dollars, without risk, Rusty, is better than one thousand and a strong suspicion hanging over you of being concerned in a capital crime."

"All right, guv'nor; I must say you always gets the best of a cove."

"Yes; it's like 'buckin' the tiger' to kick against Hank Notting. Go back to Seabright and keep as quiet as a 'long-shore crab.'"

"I'm sick of that place, guv'nor, it's so blamed quiet. No ructions there, never."

"Can't be helped, Rusty; by and by when that little crib-crack is forgotten I'll start you in a job; meanwhile keep still, but never forgetting that it's no use trying to bluff the old man."

Rusty retired, and Notting turned to his son.

"See that!" he said, in a tone that showed his anxiety.

"Yes, we'll have to get rid of Rusty. He knows too much."

"The whole business was clumsy. I did not think I could make such a mess of such a job, but that Chamberlain took me unawares, the shrewd rogue!"

"Well, we are all right as matters are," Jasper remarked, consolingly, "and they'll remain all right, unless that Pinkerton clipper gets on the case."

"Sam Saunders? Oh! he's out of the business—got rich and retired. As for the rest of Pinkerton's crew—bah! they are snoops, that's all!"

But Notting was not at his ease. The very mention of Sam Saunders's name affected the professional cracksmen.

And well it might.

The old woman now appeared upon the scene, and her over-fed face glistened when she learned the history of Rusty's discomfiture.

"Get the girl here," she said, rubbing her fat hands, in anticipation of the pleasure in store. "I'll tame the little catamount; I'll break her spirit," she chuckled; "she'll be glad to marry any of the imps when I get through with her. How long before I'll have her in my motherly care?—ha! ha!"

"Some time to-morrow; she'll get the dispatch in the morning, and I'll call around before night and fetch her."

"All right; you'll see fun—oh! yes, grand fun!"

CHAPTER III.

SAM SAUNDERS RECEIVES INSTRUCTIONS.

SAM SAUNDERS kept his appointment with Doctor Howard, and the two men sat down together at a table on which was scattered a quantity of papers.

"I'll tell you all about my uncle," said Howard, "and you can form your own opinion of how he would be liable to act on his arrival in America. He was the only son of a baronet, Sir Alywin Herington, a stern old Scottish noble, whose will was immovable as the bills of

his native land. This son, Rupert, resembled his father in one respect—he was also strong-willed. When he was twenty years of age he fell in love with an opera-singer, a French or Spanish girl, and married her. His father was furious and withdrew all assistance from his son, who struggled along for an existence for some years and then started off to the United States, with his wife and son.

"That was thirty years ago?" asked the detective, who was taking notes in a small book—memoranda that would have been quite useless to any one but himself, for they were in cipher invented by himself.

"Yes, thirty years ago; their son, the man I am in search of, must be over forty years of age."

"Was the marriage-register of this Rupert ever found?"

"Yes; he was married in St. Paul's Church, Covent Garden, and his son was baptized there."

"Under what name?"

"The same as his father—Rupert."

"Have you any family portraits?"

"Here they are. One of old Sir Alywin, one of his son Rupert, and one of Sir Alywin's wife, Rupert's mother."

"His wife's is the side of the house with which you are connected?" queried the detective, scanning his employer's features closely.

"Yes; my aunt and my mother were sisters of Lady Hearington."

"Ah! Now I should like to see the notices published in the newspapers."

"Here they are. My aunt was the only one in the family who felt much interest in Rupert Hearington; but his father left his whole fortune and a large estate in Scotland to his son, or his son's heirs. The title, of course, goes to the male branch of the family. If Rupert is dead, it descends to his son, the offspring of the opera-singer; if he is also dead, to his son, or if he leaves no son the title goes to a distant cousin, but the money and real estate go to Rupert's daughter, if he leaves one."

"Then the estate is not entailed?"

"No; here are some of the papers containing advertisements."

He produced several English and American papers, of various dates, in which a firm of lawyers cited Rupert Hearington, who left London for New York thirty years before date of advertisement, to appear and prove his identity as legal heir to the title and estates of his deceased father, Sir Alywin Hearington of Clanmair, in the county of Inverness, Scotland.

"These notices were also inserted in Australian papers," added Howard; "but without result."

"It is a tough case, I fear," replied the detective, "but I'll do my best," and he smiled as he studied the face of the man before him, adding:

"A true detective never despairs."

"Then lose no time and spare no expense. Go as you please and may you win in the end!"

"Go as you please is my style, Doctor Howard!" and Saunders, gathering up certain of the papers, bade Howard good-morning. "I'll report as soon as I have anything of importance to communicate. Don't get impatient if you do not hear from me for some days."

"What about the 'sinews of war'?" asked the doctor.

"I am not in need of funds, and prefer to render my account when my task is completed."

As soon as Sam Saunders was out of the house his active mind began its work on the case, and his thoughts ran on:

"Rupert Hearington—about forty years old—of sturdy Scotch parentage—this Doctor Howard's own cousin—family traits never die out. Now what about the man whose body was found drifting out to sea three weeks ago? Is there anything in this fancied resemblance? Am I green or rusty? Rusty—by the bones of Old Hays! That looks just like a job of River Rusty's, the old villain! But the fellow is said to be dead, which I'll believe when I know it for sure. That is my lead now. Short trail or long trail—in New York or around the world—I'll follow it to the end."

CHAPTER IV.

THE WAKER UP'S DISCOVERY.

AN odd-looking figure, with an old-young face, clad in a most extraordinary garb, sat on the fence that railed in the partly-excavated foundation of a house on East Ninety-ninth street.

He was apparently some twelve years of age, but in reality some two years older. His face was tanned, freckled and wrinkled till its surface resembled the skin on the foot of a fowl, and his small hard hands bore a strange likeness to the claws of a bird.

His garments were of a composite nature. An old blue coat, bereft of its tails, covered his body. Beneath this he wore a red flannel shirt, but had, evidently, foreworn waistcoats as unnecessary articles of wearing apparel and symptoms of weakness in the wearer. A pair of cast-off pants which had seen service in the regular army, and odd shoes, completed the at-

tire of this young man, who was known to his friends by the singular cognomen of "Demy."

Demy's head was adorned with a brimless Derby hat, much too large for him, and his curly red hair stuck out from under its edge in pot-hooks, which overshadowed the sharpest pair of brown eyes in New York.

This lad was no easy-going member of society: he was what he termed a "purfeshnal!" Demy was a "waker up."

His regular business began about two o'clock A. M. He woke up lads who drove milk routes; next came grocers who went to market, then carpenters, bricklayers, and other mechanics who lived at some distance from their work; after these old women who scrubbed stores out, and so forth.

Demy was therefore a useful if not ornamental portion of humanity, and he was happy, for he possessed no small opinion of his own importance.

He was what he termed a "floundering," and the adopted son of an old lady who kept a mixed apple and peanut stand. This woman he termed aunt, and she endeavored to rule him with a rod of iron with more skill than success.

Demy was "layin' off"—so he informed a friendly police officer who paused and entered into conversation with him.

"I thought you slept in the daytime," said the policeman.

"Generally I does, but to-day I got to wake Reginald Montmorency, for he's got to 'tend rehearsal."

"Ah! Then you have actors among your customers?"

"Yis, all kinds. Say, there's a rum start along of old Mother Notting's."

"Yes, what's that?"

"Why, she's got a gal come there to live, an' I don't believe they treat her right. I see her all the time at a back winder and she cries fur everlastin'."

"How do you see her?"

"Why, our back winders looks acrost the yard into Notting's garding, and I believe they've got her shut up."

"Maybe she is sick."

"No, she ain't; she's an awful purty gal, an' I'm going to see if I can't git her out, on'y I ain't got any place to put her."

"Guess you'd better marry her," suggested the officer, with an ironical smile.

"What ye given us? Taffy an' a rag? Well, I never expect a cop to have any sense—'tain't nat'ral."

The good-natured officer smiled, and Demy produced a battered old watch with a flourish and announced that it was time to arouse Reginald Montmorency, so he nodded his head in a patronizing manner to the officer and strode off with an air of importance.

Having awakened the actor, which was a work of time, Demy sought his home. He ran up several flights of grimy stairs and unlocked a door in the rear of the house, for Demy's home was two back rooms in a large house let out piecemeal to a very poor class of tenants.

Mrs. Murphy was not of a tidy or active turn of mind, so her adopted son was not surprised to find her habitation in a state of wild disorder. He drew aside the battered shade and looked at the opposite windows.

There stood the girl Demy had described to the officer, leaning dejectedly on her elbows and staring straight across at the boy, whose sympathies she had aroused.

Demy longed for the power of communicating with her, but longed in vain. He took off his brimless hat, however, and made a low bow.

To his delight the girl smiled faintly and waved her small white hand.

"Golly! ain't she a beauty!" he said, breathlessly. "I wish I could do something for her. I'll write her a note and keep it in my pocket, handy like, and I may get a chance to see her."

He hunted about for writing materials and found an old book in which Mrs. Murphy made the milkman keep his account, and a blunt stump of a blue pencil. Then he sat down, squared his elbows, ran out his tongue sideways, and turned up his cuffs, spreading himself all over the little table.

It took him about an hour to complete his task, but at length it was done to his satisfaction.

"Guess if that cheeky cop was to see this he'd stare!" said Demy, triumphantly. "Now I'll go an' have a jolly good snooze."

While Demy enjoys his well-earned repose let us see how Hetty fares, for hers was the face which had attracted the boy at the window.

CHAPTER V.

THE LAMB AND THE WOLF.

THE morning after Notting's visit the longed-for news of her father had reached Hetty. It came in the form of a telegraphic dispatch, and ran thus:

"Have arrived at this place. Remain some months. Go home with Notting and await my return. Take N.'s advice in everything."

"HUGH CHAMBERLAIN."

The dispatch was from St. Paul, Minn., and

Hetty knew her father had been there before, so accepted in good faith the instructions it conveyed.

When Notting called that evening he found her prepared to accompany him home. Her trunk was packed and her hat and gloves lay on the table.

"Have you heard from your father, Hetty?"

"Yes; here is the dispatch."

She handed it to the villain, who glanced over it with affected surprise.

"So he is in St. Paul? Well, I fully expected to hear from Montreal or some other Canadian city. So he wants you to go home with me."

"Yes; I am surprised."

"But willing to obey him I hope?"

"Certainly; I always obey my father. I am all ready."

Notting sent for a hack, and almost in silence the pair drove to his home. It was quite dark when they arrived, but a bright light burned in the narrow hall and shone through the transom over the door.

"Welcome to my home, Hetty!" said the scoundrel.

"Thank you!" replied the girl, coldly.

The carriage had no sooner drawn up than the door flew open and Jasper appeared, with what he intended for a fascinating smile on his evil face.

"Ah! Hetty, glad to see you," he said, extending a bony, yellow hand to assist her to alight; but she sprung out of the carriage, and scarcely returned his greeting.

A gleam of spite flashed from his small eyes, which glittered with malignity like the eyes of a snake.

Hetty was soon in the house, where the family were assembled at the supper-table. She was thoroughly disheartened by the aspect of the faces around her, for instinct told her the fat old woman's smiles were forced, and she marked the cunning twinkle of her small eyes with apprehension.

"Oh! why did my father send me here?" she said, to herself.

Food was pressed on her, but she could scarcely swallow a mouthful.

"You have no appetite, dear," said the old woman, affectionately. "I must make you some of my bitters; they are an excellent tonic."

"Thank you, ma'am; I never take medicine."

A cup of tea was swallowed hastily, and then Notting led the way to the parlor. Hetty almost shuddered when she saw the gaudy furniture, flashy carpet and tawdry ornaments of this apartment in which vulgarity seemed to revel.

The girl had seen many ups and downs during her brief life, and was well used to living in cheap and common lodgings, but she was gifted with innate refinement, and detested ignorance and pretension.

"Give us a toon on the pianer," said Jasper, wishing to make himself agreeable.

Music the girl dearly loved, and it was easier for her to play than attempt to keep up a conversation, so she sat down and drew forth such melody from the cheap piano that Notting and his son stared in astonishment.

Hetty played on, lost in melancholy thought, for a strange presentiment of coming evil haunted her. She sought to drive it away, telling herself it was folly to feel apprehension on her father's account, now that she had learned he was safe and well. Suddenly a loud sound in the next room caused her to start up in fright.

Angry voices, a heavy blow, and a shrill cry of pain!

"What's that?" exclaimed the girl, turning pale as death.

"Nothing," answered Jasper; "I'll go and see."

He returned in a moment.

"It's nothing," he remarked, carelessly. "Mother struck her foot and tripped."

"Is she hurt?" asked Hetty, anxiously, for the pale, broken-hearted-looking woman was the only member of the family she had felt any interest in.

"No, she's all right; she's short-sighted and clumsy, and forever tripping over things."

"I think I shall go to bed," said Hetty, whose dark forebodings grew stronger every moment.

"Oh! it's early. Give us another toon. Something lively."

"I don't know anything lively, and I am tired."

She spoke firmly and looked cold and determined, so Jasper went in search of his grandmother to conduct the guest to her room.

It was on the third floor and was very plainly, even scantily furnished. However, Hetty was thankful that she could at least enjoy the pleasure of being alone.

Even that was denied her for a time. Old Mrs. Notting came and seated herself, after lighting the gas, which burned dimly.

"Now, my dear," she said, gazing straight into Hetty's face with her small, fishy eyes, "I must tell you about your father."

"Yes."

Hetty was standing before the glass, brushing out her long hair, and did not appear eager to hear Mrs. Notting's news.

"You know he got into trouble, I suppose?"

"Your son said so."

"It is the truth; he is in terrible trouble, and my son had to lend him every cent he has in the world. So your father said (he was here the night before he ran away) that he would be glad to assist me with the housework while you stopped here."

Hetty's large eyes grew larger still.

"I know nothing about housework," she said; "my father would never let me even dust my own room. He said it spoiled a lady's hands to work."

An evil smile passed over the sinister face of the Jezebel.

"He has changed his mind then," she said, "and I shall expect you to assist me. You must be up at six, so good-night."

Hetty scarcely answered her. Her brain was in a whirl. She had plenty of money, for Notting, in his fright, had been liberal; she could not leave this ill-omened house, for if she did she should lose all track of her father.

She must remain, though she distrusted every one in the place and dreaded she knew not what.

CHAPTER VI.

THE STRANGE WARNING.

As she was about to remove her garments she was startled by the noiseless opening of the door. It was gently pushed inward, and Hetty felt inclined to scream, as old stories of haunted houses, well-nigh forgotten since childhood, came rushing through her brain.

In another moment, however, she saw her alarm was needless, for Mrs. Notting, Junior, slowly put her white, woe-begone face into the room and advanced with her long, thin finger held to her pale lips.

She closed the door noiselessly as she had opened it and crept close to Hetty, looking like a ghost.

"Hush!" she whispered, "walls have ears!"

The frightened girl began to meditate flight, for she felt certain the woman was insane. She seemed mild, however, and looked so weak and frail that Hetty's courage returned. This poor creature had not strength to harm her.

"What do you mean?" she asked, in a whisper soft as the woman's own.

"I heard her tell you your father came here and said you must work. *It is a lie!*"

"You do not know my father," said Hetty. The pale shadow reflected for a moment.

"I think I do," she said. "Is not he a tall, fair-haired man they call Chamberlain?"

"Yes," rejoined Hetty, eagerly.

"Then he hasn't been here for three months. I remember the last time, it was in June. I went out to the garden gate to pick up the newspaper for Jasper. That was the last time he was ever in this house."

Hetty's heart beat violently. What could be the meaning of this deception on the part of the Nottings? Why had her father to borrow money from these people when he told her the day he went away that their fortune was at last assured? She remembered his saying:

"Never mind, Hetty, I've brought you up a lady, my beauty, and you need not be afraid to take your place in the world."

"Are you certain of what you say?" she asked after a few moments of silence.

The woman nodded.

"They don't pay any attention to me," she went on; "they think I don't notice what's going on, but I do."

"And my father has not been in this house since June? May he not have come while you were out?"

The woman turned her large, glittering eyes, which seemed so out of place in her wan countenance, on Hetty with a surprised look.

"I haven't been out of the house or the doorway for five years!"

"Good heavens!"

"Yes, it's true. They used to beat me more than they do now, while I went out. I was glad when they left off. But I watch them, and I hear most all they say. I can creep about so softly, and there are so many places where you can hear from one room to another. When they go out I'll show you some."

"Beat you!" ejaculated Hetty in horror.

She had scarcely heard the rest of the woman's words.

"Yes, beat me; and they'll beat you, too, if you don't do as they tell you."

"They dare not!" cried the girl, indignantly.

"My father—"

"Hush! Don't say anything. Your father is dead!"

With these words the pale shadow crept out of the room, leaving Hetty struck dumb with terror and amazement.

"She is mad!" she said, passionately. "She must be mad! Ah! this is too horrible. It cannot be."

No sleep visited her eyes till day dawned, and just as she sunk into a troubled doze a hand was

laid heavily on her shoulder and she sprang up with a scream.

"Hush! What makes you so nervous?" inquired the voice of old woman Notting, angrily.

"I did not sleep at all; I heard every hour strike, and I feel ill."

"Well, some folks can't sleep in a strange bed. Get up and hustle round. There is nothing like exercise for young people."

Hetty obeyed, and felt better, after bathing her fevered face and dressing. She passed down to the basement, where she found the ghostly woman who had been her midnight visitor.

"Good-morning," said Hetty, kindly. "Can I assist you?"

The woman was very silent, and seemed sullen; she went on with her work, half-mechanically.

Presently Mrs. Notting, the elder, appeared and sat down to breakfast, inviting Hetty to join her. Of her son's wife she took not the slightest notice.

After breakfast, during which meal neither father nor son appeared, the dishes were washed and put away. The old lady then withdrew, remarking that she was going out.

"Why don't you eat your breakfast?" inquired Hetty, in surprise, as the shadowy creature wiped the plates and cups after carefully banking the fire.

With a pitiful smile, she uncovered a yellow bowl which contained oatmeal porridge without milk and sugar.

"That's my breakfast," she said, quietly.

"What a shame!" exclaimed Hetty indignantly.

"Hush! Some of them may be near. Take no notice of me during the day. Don't speak to me. When I get a chance I'll creep into your room at night."

Hetty was too bewildered to reply. How she longed to escape from this ill-omened dwelling! The thought was useless, however; should she leave the place she must lose all trace of her father, and what would he think of her if she disobeyed his positive commands?

No; she must remain, and bear whatever ills were in store for her.

She spent days and weeks thus, without a change of any kind, except a growing unkindness on the part of the old woman. She was heartsick and weary, when the third week commenced with an adventure.

The ghostly, persecuted wife of the elder Notting was seen no more toiling in the basement, or sweeping, scrubbing and dusting through the house, and it became Hetty's duties to light the kitchen fire and drag out coal and ashes. The mornings were cold and damp, and the girl felt that she was injuring her health, and determined she would make an effort in her own defense.

She counted the roll of bills given her by Notting. Three hundred dollars.

"I never thought it was so much," she said, thoughtfully. "I'll speak to old Mrs. Notting at once."

Her hands were chapped and sore, and she had a severe cough, and almost constant pain in her side.

"Mrs. Notting," she said, entering the parlor, "I wish to speak to you."

"Very well," and the old face was grim.

"I am not accustomed to housework, and I am ill from cold, so I've made up my mind that I shall not do it any more."

"Indeed? And how are you going to pay for your keep, then?" demanded the virago, fiercely.

"I have some money; I am willing to pay my board or go elsewhere."

The girl's tone was as firm as her face was determined.

"Money? Where did you get it?"

"My father left it for me."

"Then you can begin by paying for the three weeks you have been here."

"No, I will not. I've toiled like a slave during the three weeks; you should pay me wages instead of exacting payment."

"Hey! Hey! Here's a pretty story. Well, I know the world too well to expect any gratitude, so I am not disappointed."

"You are not entitled to any. I am not in this house by my own wish, and the sooner I get out of it the better I shall like it."

The old woman had already realized that she had a strong will to combat, so she rose and left the room. A moment later Jasper entered, with his usual repulsive smile.

"Ah, Hetty, how is it that we never have any music now?" he said, taking a seat by the fire.

"Because I am maid of all work, and have no time for play," retorted the persecuted girl, bitterly.

"Yes, dear Hetty," Jasper answered, drawing near her and endeavoring to take her hand. "I see my grandmother's injustice, but that shall all be changed if you will consent to become my wife. I've tried to approach you before, but you treat me so coldly."

"Your wife?" cried Hetty, with eyes that flashed fire and crimson cheeks. "I'd die first! I know you have 'tried to approach' me. Well,

listen and take a plain—a very plain answer. I hate you as I hate the Evil One! I loathe you as I do a snake!"

"Oh! very well, miss," cried Jasper, his evil face yellow-white with rage; "take your own way, and see if you do not repent."

"My way will take me straight out of this house, and I despise you and your cowardly threats!" replied Hetty, and she swept out of the room with the air of a queen.

She hastened to her own room, intending to dress and leave the house in search of other lodgings.

"I'll go back where my father left me," she decided, as, with trembling fingers, she buttoned her cloak. Her face burned with fever, but she shook with cold, for November was almost over and it was a bitter month that year.

Arrayed in her street dress, she opened the bureau where her money was placed.

To her unbounded surprise the roll of bills was gone!

She searched carefully, but no trace of them remained in the room.

"I am robbed!" cried the girl, in dismay.

This seemed the finishing stroke, and she sat down, too miserable to think.

She heard Mrs. Notting's voice summoning her to go down-stairs and prepare supper, but she neither moved nor replied. When darkness fell she undressed and crept into bed. She had not seen the poor pale woman for many days, but she hoped for a visit from her that night.

She never came, and Hetty at length fell asleep, for she was young, and even her bitter trouble could not wholly conquer nature.

It was broad day when she woke with a start. How guilty she felt; the fires should be made and breakfast prepared. She dressed hurriedly, trembling with the cold.

To her unbounded amazement when she sought to leave the room she found she was a prisoner.

The door was fast locked from the outside.

CHAPTER VII.

MR. MURDOCK FROM CHICAGO.

SAM SAUNDERS felt as if new life had been infused into his veins, now that he was once more at work, for he was one of the Secret Service men who loved his work for its own sake.

No rider across country ever enjoyed hunting down a game fox more than this detective enjoyed hunting down a criminal, and the more difficulties that lay in his pathway the keener was the pleasure. He loved to outwit a bold, cunning villain, who would not acknowledge himself beaten till the very last inch of ground was cut from beneath his feet, and he fell headlong into the pit dug for him by the skill and courage of the tireless detective.

It was early evening and a party of ill-looking men sat smoking and drinking in an upper room in a small house in an alleyway on Willett street.

They were not gambling, but had evidently met for some purpose, and the conversation grew animated and the language forcible as they impatiently waited the arrival of some one whom they termed the boss and the "old man."

A knock at the door caused every man to turn his head, and the youth who acted as doorkeeper hastened down-stairs with a flaring tallow-candle in his hand and unlocked the stout door, but did not take down the chain.

"Have you a light to-night?" inquired the new-comer.

"Yes; where from?"

"London, Paris, and across the river."

Barney, for that was the doorkeeper's name, undid the chain and admitted a stout man who was muffled to the chin in a shaggy ulster coat. He wore a huge fur cap pulled down over his eyes and a red woolen comforter about his throat.

"Why, Snyder, I didn't know you was out yet," exclaimed Barney, in surprise.

"I got out yesterday, but didn't care to show up. My time ain't up by a jug full, but the 'lection's coming on and I've got a pretty tough pull in the ward."

"I know that, Saul, we all know that."

The two men passed up-stairs after Barney had secured the door.

Saul was loudly welcomed. He was a leading member of the band, and had been serving a term on the island for attempted burglary.

He removed his fur cap and comforter and sat down. He was not handsome, by any means; his red hair grew down on his forehead in a point in front, and his eyebrows were fully half an inch wide, while his chin jutted out like that of a bull-dog.

"Where's the old 'un?" inquired one man, looking around.

"Ain't come; there's a knock, now; look lively, Barney!"

Barney vanished, but soon reappeared followed by two men, one of whom was Notting.

"A new mate," said the leader of the gang.

"A Chicago man. He comes with a letter from Phil Burr."

"He's welcome if you bring him."

The oldest member of the party was the speaker, but some of the others looked sharply at the stranger.

"Our friend," Notting resumed, with a wave of his hand toward the Chicago man, "is just now wanted for a little money-making matter. He left between two suns and left all his tools behind."

"Yes; the most perfect dies and all the rest of the plant," added the stranger, speaking in a slow way, with a slight Scottish accent.

"I suppose the coppers collared them?" asked Saul, eagerly.

"No doubt. They were worth five thousand dollars if they were worth one cent."

An old man clasped his closely shorn head between his hands and groaned.

The Scotchman seemed to take the matter philosophically. He was a smallish man and wore a full brown beard and rather long hair.

Notting sat down and began to plan for sneak-thieving, which he apologetically explained was work for the young and inexperienced members of the gang.

"Murdock comes from Phil," he said, in explanation, "and he'll think this is pretty small talk for us. He has heard of us. Let me present you to Mr. Stacy, Murdock."

The Scotchman immediately replied that the fame of the party had extended far and wide, which pleased his hearers greatly, with the exception of Notting, who seemed preoccupied and out of spirits.

Mr. Murdock, of Chicago, was a quietly inquisitive man; without appearing to ask questions, he managed to elicit a great deal of information.

One of the members of the party assembled at the house in the alley on Willett street was a relative of Stacy's, who ranked next to Notting among the thieves. He was a young man and remarkably fine-looking, but more thoroughly depraved than many older rogues.

Harold Gaubard was partly French and partly Irish, and he seemed to have inherited all the bad and evil traits of both nations, and none of the good.

He was tall, finely-proportioned and powerful, and his face would have deceived a skilled physiognomist. His forehead was wide and crowned with jet-black curling locks; his eyes deep-blue, large and clear; his nose a handsome aquiline, and his lips full, red and parted frequently in a pleasant smile, displaying even, pearly teeth, which appeared all the whiter when contrasted with his heavy black mustache.

This young man seemed to interest Mr. Murdock, of Chicago, and he left the others of the party and walked out in his company.

"These are a beggarly lot," remarked Gaubard, when the two were in the street. "They make me sick with their petty crib-cracking and sachel-snatching rackets. I'm ashamed of the whole shabby crowd. A man once belonged to the gang named Chamberlain. He had plenty of pluck, but he has disappeared."

"Gone up?"

"No; I'm blamed if I don't think something happened to him."

"Why?"

"Because we planned a little job together last time I saw him, and he wasn't the color to go back or bluff a pal."

Mr. Murdock of Chicago, or Sam Saunders of New York was slightly interested in Gaubard's friend, but not sufficiently so to excite curiosity or suspicion.

"And he has failed you, this time?" he queried, carelessly.

"That's what I can't make out. He told me it would be the last job he'd go in for before crossing the pond. He'd struck it rich in England, come into a fortune, or title, or something."

"What?"

"Come into a fortune, that's what he said."

"When did you see him last?"

"Let me see, some time in September—near the end."

"Do you know where he lived, and whether he had a family or not?"

"I don't know where he lived, but he had a daughter."

Sam Saunders summed up the story he had just heard and compared it with the vague suspicions which had been floating through his mind.

The murdered man in the cat-boat, whose dead face bore such a striking resemblance to that of Frank Howard, who had crossed the ocean to search for his long-lost cousin. The tale this man Chamberlain had related to Gaubard of the estate or title in England, and the sudden disappearance of Chamberlain.

This was the clew he had found—a clew which might guide him straight to the discovery of a crime, and also end in tracing the history of the baronet's son who had left his home in disgrace so long ago.

If so, the daughter must be found.

"Do you think your friend met with foul play?" the detective inquired.

"I can't tell; he was well liked, but I think sometimes that Notting could tell what he is about. They were always together."

The detective parted from the Frenchman, fully impressed with the idea that the missing man from the gang of thieves was none other than the missing earl.

He went home to think matters over, but wasted little time over the operation.

Next day a red-faced man, who looked like a countryman, called at the morgue and requested to see the pictures of the unknown dead.

He examined several before he found the one he sought. It was the photograph of the man whose body was found in the cat-boat on the 27th of September!

"Nothing has ever been found out about this case, I presume?" asked the red-faced individual.

"No; oh! that's nothing. Half the bodies found are never claimed, and any amount of people are put out of the way in New York and no clew to their murderers ever turns up. Look at the Nathan murder, Doctor Burdell, and the man who was shot dead at ten o'clock in the morning in his office on crowded Broadway."

"Yes, and these were all prominent people, too."

"That's so. Done with that photo?"

"Who takes them? Would it be possible to procure a copy?"

"A man named Martin. I'll give you his address."

The red-faced countryman lost no time in seeking Mr. Martin, the photographer, and by evening he had a copy of the photograph in the morgue in his pocket.

He had studied Frank Howard's face during his interview with him in the hotel, and he knew that the resemblance between his face and that of the murdered man was no fancied one.

The red-faced countryman sought the lodgings of Sam Saunders, and soon reappeared transformed. He was now Mr. Murdock, the counterfeiter of Chicago.

He met Harold Gaubard by appointment in a restaurant on Broadway.

"You have not heard any news of your friend Chamberlain, I suppose?" asked the detective, carelessly.

"No. Not one word."

"By the way, I once met a man of that name."

"Indeed, where?"

"Years ago, out West. Afterward I heard of his death."

"Indeed? What sort of appearing man was he?"

"Here's his photograph."

The detective drew the picture from his pocket and laid it on the table before his companion.

"Great heavens! That is my friend! And he is dead?"

"Yes. He has been dead for about two months."

"Where did he die? Where did you get this?"

"He was found shot through the heart, floating in a cat-boat just off Sandy Hook."

"When?"

"On the 27th of last September."

CHAPTER VIII.

MARRIAGE BY PROXY.

NOTTING had not remained long in the thieves' den.

"Mr. Murdock, I shall leave you," he said, "with my friends, for I have private business to attend to. Stacy, will you come with me? I want a word with you."

They left the house and walked silently along till they gained Stanton street, where they took the car for up-town.

"Didn't you tell me you had a daughter?" asked Notting, suddenly.

His companion looked surprised.

"Yes, I did."

"How old is she?"

"Sixteen."

"What does she look like? I am not inquiring from curiosity alone."

"She ain't handsome—that's a fact; she takes after my wife's family."

"And they are what? Dark or fair?"

"Black as the pot."

"Hum! I'll go home with you and see your daughter."

"Very well."

Stacy was thoroughly mystified.

Notting, whom he regarded as a sort of chief, had never displayed any interest in his domestic relations before. Whence this sudden anxiety on the subject of his daughter?

"Have you other children?"

"Only one, a boy."

"What is he? How old is he?"

"He is eighteen, and he is with his mother's folks, down South, clerking in a store."

"Supports himself?"

"Yes; the fact is, he turned up his nose at me, and so I sent him packing."

"But the girl, she is more sensible?"

"She! Why, Madge is a regular limb."

"Is she? All the better."

"See here, Notting, I would like to know what you are driving at."

"Well, I'll tell you. My son Jasper is on the lookout for a wife, and I don't want him to marry into some hymn-singing, mischief-making crowd who will turn him against me and so play the back-hand generally."

"Of course not."

"He has got acquainted with some Methodistical crowd, and I am afraid they'll rope him in to marry one of their washed-out, pink-eyed daughters. You know I'm well-fixed, and these people know it. Jasper was a leery cove, but he has turned so queer and dumb I don't know what to make of him. If I could marry him to a smart girl of the right sort it would be the making of him."

"Madge will soon wake him up if he marries her," declared Stacy, with a grin.

"Does she know your business?"

"You bet! and glories in it!"

Notting looked relieved. A young woman without scruples of conscience—just what he required.

"Where do you get off?" he asked, when they reached Thirty-fifth street.

"Here's my house, two doors from the corner, east."

The house was a handsome dwelling, and Stacy seemed proud of it. He opened the door with his latch-key, and the two men entered.

A female voice was ringing through the hall as the singer played and sung some ballad more popular than melodious. The voice was powerful, but inharmonious; it possessed strength but lacked sweetness.

"That's Madge," said the father, proudly.

He threw open the door of the front parlor and a young girl, who was seated at the piano, rose with a start.

"Why, pa!" she said, in an affected manner.

She was a tall, thin girl, whose complexion was so dark that she might have passed for a quadroon. Her hair was blue-black, coarse and kinky, and her features plain. The eyes were large and shaded by long lashes; but the nose was thick and widened at the point, the nostrils being large and spreading. Her mouth was too full-lipped for beauty, but her teeth were fine, and a heavy bang concealed a narrow forehead.

She was dressed in the extreme of fashion and wore some valuable jewelry.

"Madge," said her father, "this is Mr. Notting. He called to make your acquaintance."

"Dear me! I don't see why," she replied, with a simper, playing with the bangles on her bracelets.

"I am an old friend of your father's," explained Notting. He did not admire the young lady, but wished to study her a little.

"Oh! yes, I know all about pa's friends," she answered, seating herself near Notting and smiling in what she intended for an engaging manner. "I wish I were a man; I'd join pa in all his work."

"She's got the pluck," boasted her proud father, gazing fondly on the dark face and affected smile.

"So I see. You have plenty of courage, and would not be afraid to carry out a good plan if there was a spice of danger in it?"

He asked the question earnestly, and Madge seemed surprised.

"No, indeed," she replied, lightly; "I'd like it all the better."

"You may be put to the test very soon," and Notting, arising, added, to Stacy, "I'd like a word with you in private," and led the way from the room to the hall.

Madge pouted, but returned to the piano, and soon after she heard the door close after Notting.

Her father reentered the room and stood staring absently into the fire. His daughter did not speak, for she wished her parent to note her displeasure; but finding he did not, her curiosity got the better of her bad temper and she left the piano and crossed the room.

"Pa," she said, taking him by the hand, "what are you thinking of, and what brought that horrid man here?"

"Mr. Notting is not a 'horrid man,' Madge; he is a very smart and very rich man, and he came here because he has a son who is looking out for a wife."

"I see, and he came to look at me just as he would if I were a horse he wanted to buy."

"No, but his son has become acquainted with a family who are trying to inveigle him into a marriage with their daughter. Notting don't want Jasper to marry her, and he is on the lookout for a sharp girl, like yourself, who won't be too pious."

The girl burst into a peal of laughter which was more noisy than musical. "Did you tell him there was no fear of that in my case?" she asked, sinking into a chair.

"I did; he is quite pleased with you, and we are to go and dine there to-morrow night."

"And meet the interesting young man who is in want of a wife?"

"Yes; and, remember, that Notting is a man who never forgives a slight. He has me in his power and can make or unmake me at his pleasure."

Stacy spoke sternly, and his daughter knew when he took that tone that he was not to be trifled with.

CHAPTER IX.

A BRAVE GIRL'S DEFIANCE.

NOTTING, after his peculiar interview with Madge, hastened to his home. He fancied he saw a way out of his difficulties, and summoned Jasper to a private interview without delay.

His hopeful son slouched into the parlor and sat down, looking sullen and dissatisfied. His father quickly unfolded his plan.

"Well, what do you say?" he asked, impatiently.

"I don't want this girl I never saw," and his tone was as sulky as his face.

"You are hard to please," retorted the father, ironically; "you want Hetty but you have not the pluck to win her."

"Tain't want of pluck; if it comes to that, you can't make a girl marry you if she don't want to."

"Have you tried her lately?"

"No, I haven't seen her for three weeks."

"I'll let her come down and talk to you."

He left the room and sought his mother, who handed him a door-key.

"She sulks all the time; she won't talk," declared the old woman, chuckling; "I guess she is pretty well tamed down."

Notting walked up-stairs and unlocked the door of the room where Hetty had been imprisoned for three weeks.

The girl sat at the window staring out at the cold moonlight as it fell on the snow-sprinkled yard below.

The room was cold and dark, and Notting started.

"Why, how is this, Hetty?" he asked, in affected surprise. "Why do you sit in the dark, and why have you no fire?"

"Ask my jailer, your mother," replied Hetty, briefly and bitterly.

"I did not know you were locked up like a naughty child," averred Notting, endeavoring to speak lightly of the outrage.

"I shall find out whether there is no law to punish such performances as this the moment I am released, and I shall find a method of letting the world know what goes on in this house, even if your fiend of a mother does starve me to death, as I suppose she intends."

Her face was rigid, cold, and white as that of a corpse, but her tone was firm, and Notting saw at a glance that her spirit was not broken.

"Nonsense, Hetty," he protested, in a conciliating manner. "My mother is old and regards you as a child. She was always severe, and you made her angry by threatening to leave the house where your father left you."

"That is untrue; I intended to return to the house where he left me. I should have been there now if I had not been robbed. My father never meant me to be an unpaid drudge in your house, and I do not believe he ever meant me to cross your threshold."

Notting looked rather alarmed. He was not aware that Hetty had been robbed, neither did he know what an amount of menial labor the old woman had thrust on the delicate girl who had never soiled her hands with work before.

"Robbed!"

"Yes, robbed! You gave me three hundred and fifty dollars; I spent a portion of the fifty, paying what I owed my landlady and making a few purchases, but I had over three hundred dollars when I came here—I counted it in this room—and I have been robbed of every cent."

"Why didn't you lock it up?"

"I did not know I lived in the same house with thieves."

She looked him in the face with undaunted courage.

"I am sorry," he stammered, for he was ashamed; "I'll see that your money is returned to you."

"Very good, and as soon as it is I shall leave your house and return to Miss Lippman's. My father will be certain to go there in search of me."

"You must not do that, Hetty. Your father is not going to return to New York; he is now in England, and we, Jasper, yourself, and I shall join him there."

"In England?"

"Yes; you are astonished? Did your father never hint of any change in his circumstances?"

"Yes; he spoke a great deal about such a change just before he went away, but he was often over-sanguine about schemes, so I paid very little attention."

"Well, this is a sure thing. Your father is in England—a wealthy man to-day."

"Then you have heard from him?" cried Hetty, joyfully.

"Yes; just about an hour ago I saw a letter he wrote to a friend in this city."

"And why has he not written to me?"

Hetty felt wounded to her heart's core by the fancied slight.

"He is terribly occupied by business, and he knows you are safe."

"Wait till he hears how I have been treated!" exclaimed the girl, indignantly.

"Oh! We shall change all that. You must excuse my mother. She is too strict and harsh. She always treated her own children with great severity, and she regards you as a child."

"Did she steal from her children?" asked Hetty, boldly.

"Hush! Hush! No, of course not. I think I can explain that. I suppose you have not failed to notice that my poor wife is weak-minded? I cannot bear to have her sent to any institution, but she is sometimes mischievous, and no doubt she took your money and secreted it."

"Any institution would be better than this place for the poor unfortunate, if she is still alive. I should advise you to send her to one without delay."

Notting turned pale.

This girl knew far too much. There was danger in her. She must be silenced in some way—either by becoming Jasper's wife or—he did not think of the alternative.

"If she is alive?"

"Yes; I used to hear her moaning overhead and moving about; but all has been quiet for the last few days, so I began to think God had put an end to her sufferings."

Notting flinched. He knew the cruel, remorseless nature of the old wretch he called a mother. He did not know the full extent of her atrocious conduct.

"Nonsense, my dear; you are fanciful."

"Is it fancy that your wife is a starved drudge?" asked Hetty, angrily. She had listened to the poor creature when she besought her never to notice her when any of her unnatural relatives were by; but she regretted that she had not tried to help her.

"Starved?" repeated Notting, incredulously.

"Yes, starved," echoed Hetty, fiercely.

"She does not take her meals at the table I know. My mother said it was by her own request."

"Your mother lied. She gets nothing to eat but dry oatmeal and porridge, and never has time to eat that till it is cold. When I last saw her she was starving on her feet, and I suppose the old fiend has given her less than ever since she was too ill to leave her bed."

"Good God!"

"Yes; you are not wise to bring strangers into your home. They can use their eyes and ears."

Hetty's tone was so significant that Notting's eyes sunk beneath her stern gaze.

"I'll see to this at once," he announced, and hastened from the room. The door stood wide open, and the girl left the room after removing the key, which she placed in her pocket.

She walked quietly into the parlor and stood before the fire. She was trembling with cold and excitement, but better in health than when the old woman had made her a prisoner, for she had not been put on prison fare. Mrs. Notting would have taken great pleasure in starving her, but had not dared to do that.

In the basement Hetty heard voices raised loud in anger, but could not distinguish the words.

"I hope that old Hecate may hang yet," she said, aloud.

At that moment the door opened and Jasper entered.

"Ah! Hetty, I wish to speak to you," he said.

CHAPTER X.

MADGE BESTOWS CONFIDENCE.

SAM SAUNDERS had formed a correct estimate of Harold Gaubard. That young man was both crafty and revengeful.

Gaubard knew little personally of the Nottings, father or son, but trusted to obtaining information concerning them from Stacy, or, failing him, through his daughter.

The Frenchman had been for a short time an inmate of Stacy's home. His handsome face had made an impression on Madge, and her father, becoming alarmed, had found an excuse for finding other lodgings for his attractive kinsman.

He did not intend that his daughter, whom he considered very talented, should throw herself away on a man with no better prospects than Gaubard.

He was mistaken, however, in supposing that the friendship or love between the two ended when Harold left his house. Madge was just the kind of a girl who delighted in clandestine interviews, and she readily responded to Harold's entreaties, and met him whenever he invited her to do so.

She was mistress of her father's house, her mother being dead and herself an only child. The only servant, an old colored woman, never dared question her young mistress, and Stacy was often absent, so the young lady had ample opportunities of carrying out any plans that happened to enter her head.

The first thing Gaubard did on parting with Mr. Murdock, of Chicago, alias Sam Saunders,

was to send a note to Miss Madge, requesting her to meet him in Union Square Park at two o'clock the following day.

They were both punctual.

The girl was elegantly dressed in a long seal-skin cloak, diamond jewelry, and a richly-trimmed hat and heavy silk dress. She wore a thick veil, for there was a possibility of meeting her father.

"Well, Madge," said Harold, affectionately, as they sat down in the wintry sunshine for a few moments, "what news have you to tell me?"

The girl burst into a shrill peal of laughter.

"Where is the joke?" he demanded, in some surprise.

"Why, at last I have got news of a very startling nature."

"What may it be?"

"Nothing less than a husband for your humble servant."

"What?"

"A fact! An offer has been made for my heart and hand."

"By whom?"

"You seem surprised. That is not complimentary."

Madge panted behind her veil, and her companion knew by her tone that her conceit was slightly wounded.

"Why, you are so young, Madge, dear; a mere child."

"You don't think me too young to make love to?"

"Well, I am different. I fell in love with you while we lived in the house together. You don't go out and I was surprised to think you had formed any man's acquaintance without my knowledge."

"Neither I have."

"Then how has he proposed?"

"By proxy. I feel quite like a crowned head."

"Come, dearest, tell me all the story," said Gaubard, coaxingly.

"Well, my hand is asked in marriage, I believe that is the correct term, by Mr. Notting, senior, in behalf of his son, Mr. Jasper Notting."

"Great Scott!"

"It is a fact," said Madge, pettishly; "you seem to think it very strange that any one should wish to marry me."

"Not at all, my love; why should I, when I wish so much to marry you myself?"

"I don't know. You express great surprise."

Madge was growing sulky, and her self-love must be soothed or no information could be obtained.

"I am surprised! Struck dumb by Jasper Notting's unbounded presumption. Have you ever seen him?"

"Never."

"Ah! Wait till you do, then you will understand my indignation. A mean-looking, ignorant, dissipated little beast!"

"Oh! I should have thought by what my father said he was an Adonis."

"He is, indeed! Wait till you see him."

"I should have seen him before this, but his mother is just dead."

"What is his object in seeking you?"

"I cannot tell. His father asked me if I had courage to engage in a scheme which might prove dangerous."

"What can it be?" murmured Gaubard, thoughtfully; aloud he added: "Madge, did you know a man called Chamberlain?"

"I saw him once or twice."

"Did you ever hear of his death?"

"No; is he dead?"

"I believe so; I want to find out."

"All right. I'll ask pa."

Gaubard felt certain that the Nottings were connected, in some way, with the death of the man he had regarded as a friend; but how to bring the crime home to them he knew not.

"So Notting's wife is dead?"

"Yes; he asked us there to meet with the intended bridegroom, and the meeting had to be postponed."

"I suppose it will soon take place, however."

"Yes; my father says Notting has inherited property in England, and is going there to look after it."

"Property in England?"

"Yes; how funny you are to-day. You seem dazed."

"I am not well. Then the marriage was not to take place till Mr. Notting returned?"

"Now you miss your guess. The marriage was to take place immediately, and I was to accompany them to England and Paris and enjoy a splendid time."

She rose from her seat as she spoke and consulted her watch.

"I must go," she said, "for the anxious bridegroom is to call this evening with his father, and there is lots to do. Pa went to the funeral, and he is to bring them home with him to dinner."

"When shall I meet you again?"

"I cannot tell. I'll send you a line."

She left him, and Gaubard felt that he had gained little by the interview.

Madge sped off to her home, quite satisfied.

Gaubard was the first man who had professed admiration for her, and her vanity had been so highly gratified that she fancied she loved him. Perhaps she did love him as well as it was possible for her to love any one. Her nature was excessively shallow and intensely selfish.

Gaubard understood her. He knew her weak points, and flattered her so broadly that a more intelligent girl would not have failed to read falsity in his smooth speeches and treacherous, half-mocking glances; but Madge accepted them all as just tributes to her charms.

She arrived at her home glowing with satisfaction and made elaborate preparations for receiving her new admirer.

Meanwhile Gaubard called at Willett street to meet Mr. Murdock. Their interview was to be a private one, so they arranged that it should take place during the day.

He found the detective sitting smoking in company with an old man, who was too feeble to take an active part in any villainous scheme, but whose knowledge of crooked ways was still useful to younger members of the society he frequented.

"I want to see Mr. Murdock alone," explained Gaubard to this worthy, who was known by the name of Snooks.

"All right, I'm fly."

He shuffled out of the room, in his old red flannel dressing-gown, for he was an inmate of the house, the proprietor being his son-in-law.

Mr. Snooks shuffled out, but he was indignant that his company had been dispensed with as undesirable. Had he not been too old he would have listened at the door, but his hearing was not good enough for that, so he hunted up his grandson.

The latter was a remarkable-looking being. He was not more than three feet high, although about twenty years of age. His form was thick-set and powerful, and his face ugly and grotesque enough to serve for a tobaccoist's sign. His eyes were of a greenish hue and crossed so that they appeared to run under his nose; thus they always seemed to be playing hide and seek with each other. His nose had been broken in his youth, and the process of setting that feature had been performed by unskillful hands, consequently it had a peculiar twist to one side. His teeth were few and far between, and being long and yellowish-green in hue, enhanced the native ugliness of his wide, ill-shaped mouth. His hair grew in tufts, and was such a pale flaxen that many people supposed it white from age, and his large, projecting forehead added to this delusion by imparting a bald-headed appearance to the youth.

His name was Arch, and he was as evil and malicious as he looked, which was saying a great deal.

Arch, by his grandfather's instructions, took up his station in a large closet in the front room which adjoined the one occupied by the detective and Gaubard. This closet was skillfully contrived as a place for eavesdropping.

A portion of the plaster had been removed and there was nothing between the ear of the listener and the voices he wished to overhear but the wall-paper of the back room.

Arch was so accustomed to occupying the closet that his movements were noiseless, and he took up his station seating himself comfortably on a soap-box and applying his huge red ear to the proper place for acquiring information.

While a pleased expression overspread his copper-colored face something occurred which he did not expect.

A slight scratching noise startled him, it was so near, and in another moment he fell from the box well-nigh senseless from a violent blow on the side of the head.

Looking up in bewilderment he saw a fist protruding through a rent in the paper.

He gathered himself up and fled, followed by shouts of laughter from the detective and Gaubard.

The former had tried the wall softly and soon found out Arch's secret.

"Well," cried Gaubard, when he could speak without peals of laughter, "that was the neatest trick I ever saw yet."

"I think it would be as well for us to take further precautions. Speak in French."

The conversation went on, the detective soon learning all that Gaubard could tell.

"Your friend Chamberlain is murdered," he summed up, "and Notting has all his papers. He intends to go to England and personate him."

"You are right," exclaimed Gaubard. "That is the scheme undoubtedly; but what do they want with Madge Stacy?"

"Stacy may be in the plot, and they take that way of shutting his mouth."

"Well, I see no way to gain any information except through Madge," said Gaubard, discontentedly.

"Can you get Notting's private address for me?"

"Yes."

"Do so at once; meet me here to-morrow—or, stay; meet Madge at the Park and escort her to some restaurant to eat luncheon. I'll keep on your track."

"All right."

They parted, and the detective visited the hotel, found Howard and told all he had learned.

"What shall we do next?"

"Allow Notting to take passage for England and follow him; but first I must find the girl, Chamberlain's daughter."

"How can you do it? Advertise for her?"

"No; that would put Notting up to our game—give him warning."

"Then you can do nothing till you see Gaubard. It seems such a waste of time."

"Have patience. This is no easy matter; a false step must be made by Notting, and so far he has not made it. Wait till I have his address. He keeps it a secret even from his associates. When I presented myself with the letter from Phil Burr I had to await him in an office on Broadway. Wait!"

CHAPTER XI.

JASPER LAYS A TRAP—THE SECRET HOARD.

"WELL," said Hetty, calmly, "I am here."

"I am very sorry my grandmother treated you so bad, Hetty; neither my father nor I knew anything about it."

Hetty smiled contemptuously.

"I suppose you don't believe me; you always act as if I was a liar and I don't know what."

"I trust no one in this house."

"And yet you know we were your father's friends?"

"My father must have been greatly deceived in you all."

"See here, miss; my father is too kind to tell you how much your father is in our debt."

"That is another lie."

"You are very polite."

Jasper tried to control his rage, but his snaky eyes glittered with spite.

"If my father made friends of such as you it was because he did not know you."

"What if he was as bad and worse than we are?"

He was in such a passion that the words were spoken almost in spite of him. The cool contempt which the unprotected girl displayed so mercilessly stung him, and he was coward enough to try and wound her in return.

"You are a coward and a liar!" cried Hetty, passionately.

"I am not; your father had to run away; the police were after him."

"I do not believe one word of it."

"See here, Hetty; my father would kill me if he thought I'd tell, but I know where your father is, and if you will promise to hold your tongue I'll take you to him."

The girl stared at him in amazement. What did this sudden change mean?

In experience of the world she was a child.

She had always relied on her father for counsel and protection. Now she was like a rudderless ship on the tossing deep.

She hated Jasper and distrusted him, but she entertained the same feelings for his father, while the old woman, she firmly believed, would not hesitate to commit murder.

"If you take me to my father I will pay you well," she said, her eyes fixed on the villainous face before her in a vain attempt to read it.

"I don't care about that. Have you got any warm clothes?"

"Why?"

"Because the place where he is stopping is at the seaside and it is cold."

"I have plenty of wraps—"

At this moment Notting entered. He glanced sharply at Jasper and Hetty.

"Is your wife alive?" asked the girl, coldly.

"Yes; but she is very ill. I am just going for a doctor."

"May I see her?"

"Certainly. She is in the room over this."

Without waiting further permission Hetty hastened away.

In a comfortable room, in a large soft bed, the poor wasted woman lay, her pale face and closed, deeply-shrunken eyes giving her the aspect of a corpse.

The old woman was on her knees before the grate trying to coax the fire she had hastily laid into a blaze.

Hetty gently touched the death-like hand that rested on the counterpane and Maria opened her eyes.

"It's you?" she whispered, faintly. "Stay with me."

The old woman rose, and scowling fiercely at the girl asked, harshly:

"Who told you to come here?"

"Mr. Notting," replied Hetty, boldly.

"Very good. It seems every one is going to run this house that feels like it. As you are here give her some of this. You will have to feed her with a spoon. She's shamming too sick to sit up."

Hetty took a glass containing brandy and milk and gently gave the suffering creature a little.

"I am going down-stairs now," said the old woman; "give her all of that she'll take, and as soon as I can I'll bring up some strong beef-tea. It's on the fire."

She closed the door and Hetty stood staring after her in surprise.

What did her sudden anxiety mean?

A faint whisper from the bed recalled the girl's attention to the dying woman.

"They are afraid I'll die before the doctor comes," she said, gasping between every word. "Then there would be an inquest, and every one would know I died from starvation and ill-usage."

"I am angry that I did not interfere before," cried Hetty, tears starting to her eyes and a tremor passing over her. She had never seen death before, but she instantly recognized the chill intruder's ghastly presence.

"You could not help me," said the other, in tones of calm despair, "and you would have got into trouble yourself."

"So I did. I have been locked up without light or fire for three weeks."

"I did not know—I used to pray that you would find some way to come to me."

Hetty saw by the gray shade creeping over the wasted features that she was fast growing weaker, and again she fed her with the stimulating mixture.

"They robbed you," said the sick woman. "I heard Henry accuse the old woman—I'll tell you where she keeps her money."

"Do, please do. I shall take my own and escape from the house."

"In the attic, on the left-hand side of the passage, under the window there is a loose board, there—"

The door opened and Notting entered. He looked anxiously from his wife to Hetty, but the former lay with closed eyes and the latter seemed intent upon trying to get a little of the milk past her white lips.

"Does she seem better?"

"I cannot tell," replied Hetty; "I am not a doctor and I have never seen any one so ill, before."

"Can you speak, Maria?" he asked, bending over his wife.

No answer.

"She is very weak; I think you had better let her rest."

The old woman now appeared with a bowl of beef-tea.

Soon after the door-bell rung and the doctor was ushered up-stairs.

Hetty walked out and old Mrs. Notting followed her.

As the parlor was still in the possession of Jasper, Hetty preferred her own room, cold and comfortless though it was. She intended to spend the rest of the night with the dying woman, for it was now midnight.

She stood by the window looking sadly across at the other window where she so often saw the boy whom she felt somehow was a friend. She was secure from interruption, for she had locked the door, and she opened the sash and let the fresh cold wind blow on her fevered face.

Leaning out in the broad moonlight she was distinctly visible to Demy, who was watching for her.

He tried to signal, but she could not guess his meaning.

A bright thought struck him. He drew the letter, which had cost him so much thought and labor, from his pocket, and took up the tallow candle from the table.

In one extended hand he held the important missive, in the other the candle.

Hetty understood his pantomime at last. The letter was for her. She pointed to the letter and then to herself. Demy nodded violently.

He then put the letter in his pocket and extending his arm downward went through a series of maneuvers which the girl could make nothing of.

She was terribly excited. There was but one person in the world from whom she could expect to receive tidings—her father.

Demy was still gesticulating violently, and at last Hetty fancied she caught his meaning.

He wished her to go down to the back fence and receive the precious epistle, which he evidently considered of vast importance.

Hetty signed to Demy that she would make an attempt to follow his instructions, and, unlocking the door, hastened down-stairs. She paused a moment at the door of the sick-room and heard by the voices within that the doctor was still there. She also heard Mrs. Notting, senior, speak; so, with the exception of Jasper, the attention of the whole family was engaged.

Noiselessly she stole down to the basement, and with trembling fingers undid the bolt of the door opening on the back yard.

The moonlight was waning, but the snow on the ground prevented the darkness from obscuring her way as she hastened to the fence Demy had indicated so energetically.

A tap on the opposite side assured her that her new ally was at his post, and in answer to her softly-uttered: "Who's there?" came the reply:

"Me—Demy. I've got a letter fur you. When did they let you out?"

"Only to-night. Who is the letter from—my father?"

"No, miss; from me."

Demy's tone expressed surprise, and Hetty, through her keen disappointment, felt that her hope had been unreasonable.

"Say!" resumed Denny, in a husky half-whisper; "don't believe a word young Notting says; he's a bad lot, an' a reg'ler crook."

"Do you know him?" asked Hetty, in surprise.

"Yas, I knows them all; they're no good. Cut away as soon as you ken."

"I will. How can I communicate with you?"

"I'll be in the street forenrest your door to-morrow at nine at night. If you ken cut away, do it!"

"I may. I shall try; now go away; I am afraid I shall be missed."

She left the yard and hurriedly entered the house, with her new friend's letter in her pocket.

She was glad that her forlorn position had awakened the sympathy even of this boy, though she doubted not his attempts to aid her would prove fruitless.

As she crept slowly and cautiously up the dark stairs, she heard voices in the parlor, the door of which stood open.

"Where is that infernal girl?" asked Notting, angrily.

"Locked in her own room," replied his mother.

Hetty determined to hear all, if possible, and thanked fortune that she had locked her door and taken away the key before going downstairs.

"Did you lock her in again after I ordered you to let her alone?" asked the man, fiercely; "haven't you done enough harm with your cursed meddling?"

"I didn't lock her up," answered his mother, harshly; "she locked herself in."

"Well, there is one thing sure: we'll have to get rid of her."

The helpless girl's blood ran cold as his tone struck ominously on her ear; it was so full of dread significance.

What were they about to do—commit murder?

CHAPTER XII.

THE VISIT TO THE LOFT.

JASPER broke the silence that followed with a shrill laugh.

"I was giving her a steer when you came in," he said.

"What steer? You don't mean to say she consents to marry you?"

"Not her! She is too proud; treats me like the dirt in the street; but I'll get even with the high-toned daisy. I gave her a great bam—told her I would take her to her fond parient! Ha! ha! Maybe I will."

"Did she swallow the dose?"

"I guess so. I'll have another try, and do you keep shady and give me a show."

"If she consents to leave the house, where will you take her?"

"I don't know. If she goes by herself, she'll go to Mother Lippman's, and you know she'll do anything if her fist is greased."

Hetty trembled. What a narrow escape hers had been, for had she not played the eaves-dropper she certainly would have returned to Mrs. Lippman's house as soon as she made her escape.

"Oh! Lippman's all right," averred the old woman; "she cares for nothing, and has a big pull with the police through her son."

"I think," said Notting, after a few moments' reflection, "it would be a good plan to give her back her money and let her go about her business. She is not safe in the house. She may meet that doctor, and she has already threatened to squeal. She'll go straight to Lippman's crib, and we'll know just how to have her dead to rights."

Hetty stood trembling from head to foot; she longed to fly up the stairs and find partial security in her own room, but dared not pass the half-open door lest some evil chance might cause a board to creak, or some one of the conspirators might come forth and discover her.

Jasper was the next speaker.

"So the medico said the old woman's jig was up!" he asked, carelessly.

Was it possible that he thus spoke of his unfortunate mother?

"Yes," replied his father, somewhat nervously; "and he was not at all shy in saying she had suffered from want of nourishing food and neglect."

The old woman muttered something which sounded like a curse.

"I thought you were overdoing the business," said the dying woman's hopeful son to his grandmother.

"She always stood it before."

"Well, I suppose the nourishing diet got too rich for her at last. How long before she'll pass in her checks?"

"The doctor said she'd last about twelve hours. He is coming back at daylight."

"It's time she had her beef-tea," the old woman growled, "and she won't take it from me; I'll go up and call that proud, good-for-nothing hussy."

She hustled out of the room, closing the door after her to Hetty's great joy.

On went the heavy tramp of the old Fury, and the girl's light steps followed noiselessly behind.

At the sick-room door the latter halted, and turning the knob she entered, closing the door softly.

She drew near the bed on which the dying woman apparently slept.

The beef-tea stood by the fire and several bottles of medicine were on the mantle.

Hetty was silently regarding them in the dim light of the night-lamp when the faint noise of the sick woman startled her.

"Come near," she said.

"I am here; let me give you some beef-tea."

"Thank you. Is it almost day?"

"Yes; the dawn is breaking."

"Escape from this house to-day. Go, for your life depends on it. Have you found your money?"

"Not yet; but I do not like to go leaving you so ill."

"Do not consider me. My hours are numbered. Fly for your life. They do not suspect that I know any of their secrets, but I do. You have refused to marry that wretch, Jasper, and you are in the way of a scheme of theirs. Listen to me and flee for your life!"

She found strength to half-raise herself from the pillow, but Hetty caught the sound of the old woman's heavy footsteps approaching the door and signed to the dying woman, who fell back and closed her eyes.

The unnatural old wretch entered with a frightened glance at the motionless form, but seemed reassured when she caught sight of Hetty.

"You here? I've been searching for you."

"I remained up-stairs till the doctor's visit was over, and then came down to see if I could be of any service."

"That's right; she is too weak to be left alone, and she can't bear me."

She moved about a little and then left the room.

"Has she gone down-stairs?" whispered the invalid.

"Yes."

"Then take the chance and secure your money."

Hetty hesitated. The sick woman seemed irritated by her slowness; her eyes flashed, and she seemed stronger than she had ever done before since the girl first saw her.

"Go!" she said, extending her hand and pointing to the door; "day is breaking and you may not have another chance. Go! I cannot rest till I see the money."

Thus urged Hetty ran up the stairs till she stood at the top of the house.

"On the left-hand side," she murmured, and tried the door, which was simply held to by a latch.

The window was darkened by shutters, but Hetty pushed them aside. The soft gray light of dawn fell on the roofs of the sleeping city and the girl shivered nervously in the chill air of the winter morning.

She knelt before the window and sought for the loose board. She soon found it, and it yielded to her fingers and was easily displaced. In the space between the attic floor and the laths of the ceiling of the room below were placed a number of small bags.

Hetty caught up the first. It was filled with gold pieces.

"This is not my money," she whispered, "but I shall take no more than she robbed me of."

By the feeble light she could just discern the value of each coin, and she counted them carefully till she had three hundred dollars.

She retied the mouth of the bag and was about to restore it to its hiding-place when a sound caught her ear that made her heart stand still.

It was the heavy tread of the old woman ascending the stairs to the attic.

"She has missed me, or followed me. I am lost!"

CHAPTER III.

"DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND."

MADGE STACY arrayed herself in most bewitching style for the benefit of her new admirer, though she had made up her mind to refuse his offer, by proxy, of marriage.

What little love she could spare she had bestowed on Gaubard, but she felt proud that another suitor had asked for that priceless treasure, her hand.

The time seemed long till the visitors arrived, and Madge was not a little disappointed at the appearance of Jasper.

She thought of Gaubard's tall, manly form, and drew invidious comparisons between her first lover and the mean, insignificant one who now presented himself.

She would not have felt flattered had she been

aware that Jasper was also mentally contrasting her with Hetty.

They entered into conversation, but Jasper was not a fluent talker, and the only subject Madge felt interested in was herself.

After dinner the gentlemen began to discuss the question of the marriage.

"Let it take place at once," said Notting, "if the title and estate are not to go a-begging forever. The cousin Chamberlain spoke of will come into the title, but the land and the money can be ours for the asking. Then good-by to this hole-and-corner way of living. We shall be gentlemen!"

"Does your daughter consent?" asked Jasper, who was not elated over the prospect of calling Madge his bride, but who was willing to do anything for the sake of gaining a fortune.

"I have not told her yet," said Stacy, "and I think you are the one to propose it to her, Notting."

"As you say. If you both remain here I'll see Miss Madge in the parlor."

She was seated at the piano when he entered.

"Do not let me disturb you," he said; "your father and my son can't resist the pleasures of smoking. I wish to say a few words to you."

Madge looked surprised. Was this widower of two days about to ask for her hand, not for his son, but for himself?

"When I asked you if you had courage to carry out a scheme, even if there was a spice of danger in it, you said—?"

"Yes."

The reply was given unhesitatingly.

"Well, I will tell you the scheme, but you must give me your solemn oath that what I tell you will never pass your lips."

Madge's curiosity was aroused. Her conscience was also an elastic one, so she raised her right hand and repeated after Notting:

"I swear I will never reveal one word of what I hear, and may death overtake me if I break my word."

The latter portion of this vow she did not like.

"Now," said Notting, "I will tell you the story. Some years ago I knew an Englishman who was heir to a title and estate, but he died before his father did. He left, however, one son. That son had all the papers to prove his right to the title and fortune, but he died, leaving a daughter. That daughter is the heiress to a large fortune."

"But no title?"

Madge felt no vast amount of interest in this family history, and wondered why he troubled himself about relating it.

"No title. This girl knows nothing of her rights. Her father lived under an assumed name and he left her alone."

"How did he die? Why didn't he tell her?"

"Because he was not near her. She was in one city, he in another. He was buried under an assumed name and his papers fell into my hands."

"Why do you not find the girl and tell her?"

"She can do nothing without the papers. She knows nothing."

The light was beginning to dawn on Madge. There was a strange, evil look in Notting's eyes—a significance in his tone.

"Have you no imagination, Madge?" he asked, boldly.

"I do not understand."

"Can you not fancy that you are that girl?" She started.

"A home awaits you among the nobles of the Old World. A fortune—unbounded wealth; luxury, society, the fashionable world at your feet!" said the tempter.

"But the risk?"

"Pshaw! It is a mere nothing. I have all the papers. The claim is as clear as day."

"Why should you give all this to me?" asked the wily girl, who was a match for himself in deceit and cunning.

"Because you are brave and smart enough to carry through the deception."

"Is that all?"

"No. You must also become the wife of my son. Of course I would not bestow all this on you if I did not intend to share your good fortune."

Madge paused. She loved Gaubard, but he was poor. He could not bestow fortune and rank and all the thousand and one blessings which those magic words implied.

"You are my choice," resumed Notting, seeing her hesitation, but not guessing the cause of it.

"Because I am bold and do not fear danger?"

"You are right. You have no foolish scruples of what is right and what wrong."

Madge smiled.

"No," she said, calmly.

"Will you give me your answer?"

The girl hesitated. She was deciding for life. She felt that she must have time. No thought of the wrong done to a helpless girl crossed her mind. She did not pause to consider that her whole future would be an acted lie.

These considerations did not weigh with her for a moment. The cause of her hesitation was the thought of her love for Gaubard.

"I cannot answer at once," she said; and Notting was forced to be content.

"You do not care for Jasper?"

"No, he is not attractive."

"Probably not; but the fortune goes with him."

Madge bowed. Yes, this was how matters stood. One side held wealth, position and a man she cared nothing for; the other—poverty, obscurity and a husband she loved.

She had almost decided already.

"I cannot delay long. I wish to leave for Europe during this week."

"I will send my answer by my father tomorrow."

Jasper and Stacy now entered the room, and Madge played and sung and flirted with the new aspirant for her hand to her heart's content.

"Well?" said Stacy, interrogatively, when the guests had departed.

"I have heard the story and delayed giving an answer till we talked it over. Will it work—this scheme?"

"Certainly."

"But I shall have no hold on the money if I am tied to this Jasper before I obtain it."

Stacy shrugged his shoulders.

"That is the condition."

"Why have they selected me?"

"For two reasons. One is that you are bold and not too scrupulous."

"The other?"

"Because Notting has me in his power."

"Not now, after he has revealed his plans to us."

"That makes no difference. He would not reveal them if he was not aware that we dared not expose them."

"Why not?"

Madge regarded her oath as nothing; such a trifle as a solemn promise would never hold her in check.

"Because I tell you I am in his power. Because his scheme is nothing till it is carried into effect. Notting has broken no law."

"He has murdered the Englishman."

Stacy grew pale.

"What makes you say so?"

"Because he has all his papers."

"Pshaw! that is nothing. He was with the man when he died, and naturally the papers fell into his hands."

"Why didn't he find the true heiress and give them to her?"

"Because he knows nothing about her, and we are friends."

"Out of pure love for us he wishes us to share his good fortune?" she said.

A mocking laugh rung from her lips.

"How kind, generous, philanthropic he is."

Stacy's face grew dark, and his tone was harsher than his daughter had ever heard it before.

"If all you can do is laugh and sneer, I am sorry I spoke to Notting about you."

"Ah! So you recommended me to play this rôle?"

"Certainly. I am tired of living by my wits at the risk of life or liberty if I can do better."

"Do not lose your temper. I shall, in all probability, decide in your friend's favor. It would be so pleasant to queen it on my estate."

"I should think so."

"There is only one drawback," said Madge, musingly.

"And that is?"

"Jasper."

"Well, you cannot have the sweet without the bitter."

"But the bitter is so exceedingly nauseous."

"Ah! Any husband would displease you; you have been spoiled by too much indulgence."

"No; there are men who would make agreeable husbands."

"You are thinking of Harold Gaubard."

"What if I am?"

Her face was defiant and her voice aggressive.

"Nothing; except that he does not return the compliment."

"I do not believe you."

"I am obliged. Shall I have the pleasure of convincing you?"

"If you can."

"Very well. I shall see Gaubard, and you may hear from him that he relinquishes all claim on your affections."

"If I do, I shall accept Mr. Notting's offer."

Madge fancied she was safe in making this promise.

Her father put on his hat and overcoat and left the house. He intended to meet Gaubard and some others in Willett street.

CHAPTER XIV.

SAM SEES THE TRAIL CLEAR.

THEY were already assembled when he entered, Barney informing him in a hoarse whisper that the "booth was chock-full."

They greeted him with great heartiness, for a whisper had gone around that he was about to leave them.

No one knew just how it originated, but it had spread till all the "gang" knew that Notting and himself had "queered."

After a general conversation, Stacy drew Gaubard to one side, saying, "I want to ask you a question, Harry."

Mr. Murdock, of Chicago was not present, but Gaubard had promised to meet him that night, and he hoped to obtain the information he wanted from Stacy instead of Madge.

"Will you do me a favor?" asked Stacy, looking the other full in the face.

"It depends."

Gaubard spoke coldly. Stacy had forbidden him his house and had not acted the part of a kinsman.

"See here, Harry; you may feel a little ugly toward me on account of Madge, but I don't think you ever cared for her."

Stacy paused, but Gaubard was not going to assist him, so he resumed:

"Madge is not the sort of wife for you. She is high-tempered and spoiled; she is not handsome—I can see that, though she is my own child—and she won't have a cent when she marries, for I am a poor man."

"What are you heading at?"

"This. I want you to know that she has a good offer from another man, but she fancies she is bound to you. Some foolish, school-girl notion."

"She ain't bound to me," said the young man, sulkily.

"That's what I tell her. Will you write a note and say that it is all nonsense?"

"On one condition."

"And that is?"

"That you tell me who the man is she is going to marry."

Stacy paused for a moment's reflection, then said, slowly:

"I don't see why you should not know. It is Jasper Notting."

"And you will go to England as soon as the wedding is over, to inherit property?"

The plotter grew pale.

"How did you know?"

"I heard it. Every one knows that you and Notting are cooling off."

"Nonsense!"

"Well, I don't see any reason for keeping Madge from making a fine match, so I'll write the letter if you will invite me to the wedding."

"Oh! It is to be private. Jasper's mother only died the other day."

"So I heard. By the way, what has become of Chamberlain?"

The Frenchman's sharp eyes were fixed on Stacy's face, which changed color.

"I am sure I do not know," he stammered.

"I do. He is dead."

"You—you don't say so?"

"Yes; at least I heard so."

Gaubard now began to think he had gone too far, so he assumed a careless air.

"When do you want the letter?" he asked, lighting a cigar.

"To-night, if you will give it to me."

"So soon? When does the marriage take place?"

"Immediately. Notting must go to England at once."

"Indeed?"

"Yes; there is no occasion for delay."

"No; I was only wondering what was the attraction Madge held for Jasper. He is heir to a fortune, it seems, and Madge has neither beauty nor money to recommend her."

"Just so. I am glad you take such a sensible view of the matter. Now for the promised letter."

"You must accompany me at once to my lodgings."

"Shall you be alone?"

"No; I am friendly with Murdock, of Chicago, and shall meet him in a saloon outside. He don't count; he can read the newspaper till we get through."

"Very well."

Stacy thought Mr. Murdock of Chicago was "safe." He little knew that Sam Saunders was put on the scent!

The two men left the house, and at a neighboring saloon they found the Scotchman engaged in conversation with a Dutchman and an Italian.

"Will you accompany me to my rooms, Mr. Murdock?" asked Gaubard.

"I'll be very happy."

Gaubard introduced the stranger to Stacy, and the party took an up-town car to Fourteenth street.

The Frenchman's rooms were in a lodging-house, and the hall was in semi-darkness when the trio stood there waiting for Gaubard to lead the way up-stairs, for the gas was turned off at eleven o'clock after the manner of cheap lodging-houses.

He took the chance to slip into the detective's hand a slip of paper on which were the words:

"He is Madge's father," and then piloted the others up-stairs.

CHAPTER XV.

HETTY'S LEAVE-TAKING.

HETTY's presence of mind did not desert her. She hastily replaced the bag and slipped the board down, trusting to the uncertain light to prevent the old woman from observing that it had been tampered with.

Now for a hiding-place. The attic was neither lathed nor plastered, and at the further end a huge beam crossed from one side of the arched ceiling to the other. On this hung some old carpets and other disused articles. Quick as a flash, Hetty darted behind them, and was just in time to escape the old woman, who entered, puffing and out of breath.

"The idea!" she muttered to herself, "of Henry telling me to give that hussy back the money! I'll do no such thing. Jasper said Chamberlain had five hundred dollars, but they thought it was better not to take it. Hum! They are more nice than wise."

What did this mean the trembling girl asked herself.

She heard the old woman clinking gold, and was filled with terror lest she should miss the sum abstracted.

"To think of that sly, artful wretch of a Maria having this!" she said, indignantly, "I wonder where on earth she got it. Sewed up in her dress! It's lucky I overhauled it before I threw it in the rag-bag. I'm glad she's done for, but I suppose I'll have to keep a servant. I ain't going to slave my life out."

Her meaning was plain. The dying woman had by some means become possessed of some money, perhaps with a hope of being able to escape from the house, and the old woman had found and, of course, stolen it.

While she muttered and arranged her money the voice of her son roused her.

"Of course," she grumbled; "that's always the way."

Rising hastily she stumbled down-stairs.

Hetty waited till all was quiet and followed her. The sick-room door stood open and Notting was just leaving it.

"How is your wife?" asked the girl, who observed that he looked pale and agitated.

"She just breathed her last."

"Poor soul. She is better off."

"I suppose so."

Hardened though he was he appeared a little shocked.

"Mr. Notting," said Hetty, who felt this was a good opportunity to inform him she intended leaving the house, "I am going away from here."

"Very well. If you are not satisfied you may as well. I am sorry I could not make you more comfortable."

"Never mind."

"By the way, you said something about money. I must make up that sum you lost."

"You need not trouble about that. I shall return to Mrs. Lippman's house. She must trust me till my father returns."

Notting's eyes were filled with evil joy. He thought Hetty was walking right into the pit he had dug for her.

"Well, I suppose that is as wise a thing as you can do?"

"Yes; and my father will know where to find me when he returns."

"Exactly. He will know where to find you when he returns."

"I shall leave at once," said Hetty, for she saw that Notting seemed in haste.

"Very well. I am going to see the doctor."

Without a farewell of any sort, Hetty left the house.

She dreaded to remain a moment, and hastened away. She was impatient till she found a hack, for she intended to have her trunk removed without delay. The hour was early, but anxiety lent the girl speed, and at length she found a livery stable where some of the men were sleepily getting ready for their day's work.

They seemed surprised when she stated her business; but the sight of a well-filled pocket-book hastened their movements, and Hetty soon had the satisfaction of finding herself back at the house where she had endured so much.

"Go up and bring down my trunk," she said, when the hackman drew up at the gate. "If they ask any questions, tell them we are going to Mrs. Lippman's, No. — East Fifteenth street."

"All right, miss."

No one interfered with the man, who soon reappeared with the trunk.

"Do you know any respectable house in this neighborhood where I can stay for a few hours?"

"If you like, miss, I'll take you to my cousin's. It's quiet."

"Very well. I am anxious those people should not know where I am. Leave my trunk at the stable."

The hackman was an easy-going fellow, with a great gift of minding his own business, and he drove Hetty a few blocks to the house of his cousin, which was a small one consisting of three rooms over a small candy-store.

"Mrs. Muldoon, ma'am," he announced, as

the proprietress came out to interview her relative, whom she addressed as "Terry, me boy."

"Yis, Terry."

"Here's a young lady jist arrived from the country, and wants to wait for a friend who is coming from Philadelphy to-night."

"And heartily wilcome. Walk in, miss. Me front room is emphy, an' an iligant room it is."

Hetty hastened to pay the hackman, and took refuge in the "iligant room," where she took from her pocket Demy's letter, which she had not found time to peruse, for indeed it was a work of time.

"DEER LADIE:—Don't be mad Nor nothin fur I take my Pen in han to let you no off you are shutt up or they ill treat you too gif me notice an. He tell a cop i no awl you gott too du Wafe your hanker-chur. So no more at presen."

This was all, and Hetty smiled sadly as she remembered how delighted she was at the thought of receiving this letter, when she hoped it was from her father.

The hours passed wearily, and Hetty's spirits sunk, as she waited for nine o'clock and Demy. She had no friend on earth, and firmly believed unless she escaped them the Nottings would take her life.

When the hour drew near she felt weak and nervous. She had eaten nothing all day, though the landlady had invited her to do so.

She replaced her hat and cloak and tied a thick black veil over her face. This was a new purchase which Mrs. Muldoon's little girl had made in her behalf.

Bidding the kind woman good-by, she set forth with a feeling of deep depression.

She was not only friendless and homeless, but hunted and in danger.

She did not even know whether she could trust this boy or not, but trust him she must.

Her father, when he returned or wrote, would address the Nottings. She intended to instruct Henry to watch for him; as for letters, she scarcely hoped for any. She intended, however, to change her address and notify the nearest station-master of the change.

This was all she could do.

Henry was at the appointed place on time. He had washed his face and tried to comb his hair. The latter attempt, however, had proved too painful and been reluctantly relinquished.

"Hallo miss."

Hetty started nervously when Demy hailed her. If the boy recognized her so readily, why should not others do the same?

"Don't be skeered. Say, have you got any place to go?"

"No, I thought you would find me some quiet place where I can hide away for a little while."

"Let's see. Would you have any objections to play-actors?"

Hetty knew little of the profession, but replied, readily:

"No; not if they are kind-hearted and honest."

"They're fu'st-rate. Reg'lar high-toned purfesk. Reginald Montmorency and lady. London's where they came from."

"Where do they live?"

"Not fur off. They took a flat when he was playin' in the Bowery, but he got sick an' there kin' of broke up, so they are on the make, an' I ast them if they'd take a friend of mine to board."

"And they will?" asked Hetty, eagerly.

"Yes; they agreed. Come on, I s'pose you got some stamps?"

"Stamps?"

"Yes, sugar, brass, boodle. Oh! I never know how to talk to ladies. Coins. Spondulicks—money."

"Oh! Yes, I have some money; but I am not rich and shall be glad to live cheaply."

"That's all right, an' here we are."

Demy stopped at a somewhat pretentious flat-house, and ringing a bell the door opened and he walked up two flights of stairs.

He then knocked loudly at a door and waited some time for a response.

"Maybe they are havin' a snooze," suggested Demy; "they ain't out, fur I tole 'em we was comin'."

At this moment the door was opened by a very stout lady in a loose wrapper, who wore her hair in curl-papers, but who welcomed Hetty with a kindly smile.

"Come in, dear," she said, "the boy has told me how shamefully you have been treated. Do come in and sit down."

Hetty felt alarmed. What had Demy confided to these strangers?

The flat was somewhat scantily furnished, and various portions of theatrical wardrobes lay around carelessly.

"Sit right down," resumed Mrs. Montmorency, taking a chair herself, "and do tell me how you escaped."

Hetty briefly related her story, suppressing the portion relating to the death of Mrs. Notting and the terrible conversation she had overheard.

The actress was full of sympathy and so extremely sentimental that she really enjoyed the

thought of sheltering Hetty from her cruel persecutors.

Demy had been wise and shrewd enough to suppress all names, and Hetty followed his example.

"My husband, Reginald, of course you have heard of him, is a famous actor and has a friend who writes, and I am sure he could make an elegant play out of your story. Now about your room and board. I am not accustomed to letting rooms, but we are both out of an engagement, and, to tell the plain truth, hard up. Will five dollars a week be too much? I shall treat you like a sister and you must tell me how you like things cooked."

The conversation, if it could be termed such, was interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Montmorency himself, clad in a yellow dressing-gown which was too short for him and had evidently once been a portion of his stage wardrobe. He was a medium sized man with a pale, slack-baked complexion, heavy, black mustache which was not guiltless of dye, and a scowling brow.

Hetty felt apprehensive when she met this gentleman's eye. He seemed stern and unrelenting, but this expression was deceitful and acquired by practice, for Reginald Montmorency was generally cast as the heavy villain and stage ruffian.

He was introduced to Miss Fanny Hastings, which name Hetty assumed, and vied with his wife in bidding her welcome.

"There is no reason that I can see," he said, after a long stare at our heroine, "why Miss Hastings should not become a professional."

"Just what I was thinking, Reg," exclaimed his wife, enthusiastically.

"To-morrow I shall see a new manager, and if you like will mention you."

"I should prefer to wait a little," said Hetty.

Demy now rose to take his departure, and Hetty followed him to the door.

She felt intuitively that the boy would regard the offer of a reward as an insult, but she wished him to assist her still further.

"Demy," she said, "I want you to keep as close a watch on that house as you can spare time to do; do not attract attention, but watch in case my father returns there."

"But how am I to know him?"

"Here is his photograph. If you see him tell him where I am."

"All right. I s'abe."

"I am very grateful to you, Demy, and I hope you will often come and see me—you are the only friend I have."

"I'll come, and don't you forget it."

Demy hastened away in a desperate state of embarrassment. He was full of pluck, but he was desperately afraid of girls.

Hetty had eaten nothing all day and she felt faint, but was afraid to suggest sending out for a meal lest she should offend her entertainers.

They were also in an uncomfortable position, for they were what Reginald Montmorency termed "dead broke."

"Em," said the great actor, "had you not better show Miss Hastings her room?" He took the opportunity of Hetty's face being turned away to whisper: "Ask her for the rent and I'll go and bring in some grub."

Hetty fortunately had tact enough to offer payment in advance, and in reply to her hostess's many apologies for the poor accommodation she had at her disposal thanked her for taking her in at all.

Leaving her guest to smooth her hair and bathe her face, "Em" hastened back to her husband, and when Hetty re-entered the sitting-room that gentleman had vanished.

"Poor Reg," said his wife, "he has gone out to bring in supper."

"Not on my account, I hope."

"Well, I may say on all our accounts, for I do not mind telling you we have had nothing to eat to-day!"

This seemed dreadful, but Hetty soon grew accustomed to the style of housekeeping indulged in by the Montmorencys.

One day it was a feast, the next a famine.

They were gay over their supper, which was a good one, and both husband and wife held out great inducements to Hetty to embrace the profession.

"A friend of mine is coming to-morrow," said Mr. Montmorency, "to whom I shall introduce you. He is not an actor, but a very clever fellow. I believe he is a writer. His name is Mr. Harold Gaubard."

CHAPTER XVI.

MONSIEUR TALKS TOO MUCH.

LIGHTING a lamp which stood in readiness, Gaubard said:

"Take seats, gentlemen," and proceeded to do the honors of his establishment by bringing out refreshments in the form of spirits and water.

Stacy sat down and began to engage the Scotchman in conversation. The detective was anxious to obtain as much information as possible, for he did not know how soon the "gang" would discover his letter of introduction from Phil Burr was a forgery.

He knew the said Phil Burr. He was an eminent "queer cole fencer," or passer of bad or counterfeit bills. It was by Sam Saunders's skill he had been trapped on two different occasions and served terms.

Phil Burr was what thieves term a "queer bird." He was always supposed to be a reformed thief, but continued his nefarious trade in spite of his profession of religion.

Occasionally he was caught, and Sam Saunders was the officer whose skill had led to his arrest after one of his most successful "seasons" in Chicago.

The detective had a gift of imitating handwriting as well as immense skill in disguises.

By means of the former accomplishment he had obtained an introduction to the Willett street gang.

He had been, however, disappointed at the result. Summing up all he had learned it amounted to this: The dead man in the catboat was Chamberlain. The missing baronet was Chamberlain. Notting had been his most intimate friend, and Notting was now in possession of his papers and intended to personate him. So far all was plain. Now the next thing to be done was to connect Notting with the murder. Gaubard was useful and trustworthy so far as this matter went.

He was anxious to avenge Chamberlain, but the detective feared he could be bought by the otherside.

The two Nottings had ceased to visit the Willett street house, and were not to be found in any of their old haunts.

"I shall not lose sight of Stacy," said Saunders; "by following him up I may ascertain where Notting is to be found, and Chamberlain's daughter will prove a strong card if I can only find her."

Gaubard had come to the conclusion that his best plan was to agree to Stacy's requests and wait the results.

So he wrote a letter to Madge which he felt certain would achieve his object.

Stacy was busy questioning the Scotchman while Gaubard wrote, and both men drank freely—that is, Stacy really did drink, while the detective took advantage of the newspaper he held to conceal his glass, which he filled with water instead of liquor.

"I've not seen anything of Notting lately," remarked Saunders, when Stacy had imbibed enough to make him rather communicative.

"No; he has been busy."

"Come into a fortune," added Gaubard, with a meaning look at Saunders.

"You—you ought to be careful," grumbled Stacy, looking a little alarmed.

"Nonsense. Mr. Murdock is Notting's friend."

"That's so. Well—"

"Well, I am glad to hear of his good luck," said Saunders, cordially.

"He hasn't got it yet, you know; he is going to England to get it."

"Indeed I suppose as he is an American he may have some difficulty in making his claim good, establishing it?"

"No, I guess not. Notting is a fly cove."

"No doubt. I have had some experience in such matters, however; I inherited a fortune in Scotland, but couldn't prove my claim."

"Oh! I guess Notting is all right," said Stacy, looking rather uneasy.

"Probably. Let us hope so."

Gaubard had finished his letter and Stacy took it, and with it his departure. He seemed alarmed and the detective relinquished his intention of "piping" him.

"I have something to tell you," said the Frenchman, as soon as the detective and he were alone.

"Yes, I thought as much."

Gaubard related his story and Sam Saunders jumped to a conclusion.

"They mean that Madge should personate Chamberlain's daughter," he said, half-aloud.

"You are right."

Gaubard's eyes glistened.

"So that's the game! Well, I was a blind mule not to see it."

"That is only my idea."

Saunders watched the Frenchman closely.

Could he be trusted?

"If that is their game," said he, "I see my way to an easy living."

"How?"

"When they go to England to inherit their fortune I shall accompany them."

"I must ask you to explain yourself."

"I shall go on the same boat. I don't know what their names may be after they cross the pond."

"What about Chamberlain?"

"Well, if he is dead I can't do much for him, and I can squeal if Notting does not pay me well."

So this was Mr. Harold Gaubard in his true colors!

Sam Saunders smiled.

"Then," resumed the other, lost in the brilliant prospects his fancy painted, "I can live in Paris, my native city. I'll make Notting hand over handsonely and I can do what I like with Madge."

"Your future is assured then, it appears?"
Saunders felt satisfied, not disappointed. He had read this man's true character aright.
"Just so. Don't you think I am right to take advantage of every chance?"
"Certainly."
"If you come here to-morrow night, I'll tell you what Madge says."
"I thought you had written a farewell letter to the lady."
"So I did, but Madge can read between the lines."
"I don't see how—"
"Why, I gave her up because she was too good for me—you see? Told her to think of me sometimes, a heart-broken wanderer, when she was happy in her splendor."
"And you think that will affect her?"
"Of course. I said I would be at our old meeting-place to-morrow, and she will come. I bet you five to one she will."
"Well, I must go. I may look in to-morrow, but after that I leave the city for Boston."
"So? I shall be sorry to lose you."
So they parted.
"I'm glad that fellow is going away," said Gaubard to himself, rather uneasily. "I've been a fool and let my confounded tongue wag like an old woman's. He knows too much."
"So I was not mistaken in you, my frog-eating friend," was the detective's thought; "you will make it easy for me to pipe the rest of the crowd."

CHAPTER XVII.

HETTY'S NEW HOME.

HETTY woke up next day with the curious feeling which many persons experience who have slept in a strange place.

Her trunk had already arrived. Demy had brought it from the livery-stable on a hand-cart, for the boy delighted in mystery and was determined no one but himself should know Hetty's hiding-place.

He was waiting to see her, the actress informed her, and as soon as her hasty toilet was completed she walked into the kitchen, where Demy sat before the range, watching Mrs. Montmorency making toast and giving her hints on the culinary art.

"Hullo! how did you sleep Miss Hastings?" he inquired, when his *protégée* appeared.

"Very soundly and too long. I must apologize for being late."

The last portion of Hetty's reply was addressed to the actress.

"Oh! never mind. We are lazy people. My husband ain't up yet."

"He's a daisy to sleep; you ought to wake him once," said Demy.

"Yes; Reginald always sleeps late when we are not on the road."

"Can't do it then. Works the barn-storming route. One-night stands," suggested the boy, with a wink.

"It is a hard life," sighed the actress, who was fat enough to convey the impression that a hard life agreed with her.

"Now, Miss Fanny," said Demy, who had given the Montmorencys the idea that he was well acquainted with our heroine.

"Yes, Demy; by the way, I have not yet thanked you for bringing my trunk so promptly. What do I owe you?"

"Nawthin'," said Demy, blushing copper-color.

"Nonsense! I will not ask you to do anything for me if you will not allow me to pay you for your time at least."

"Well, you kin pay for the next thing; but come into the parlor, I want to tell you somethin'."

Demy led the way, and Hetty followed.

"See here," he said, in a low tone, "they are busy at the house with the funeral; but when they git through with that they'll start on hunting you up."

"Yes, and find I have escaped them."

"Now I know somethin'. They ain't got that pore woman nor you to do the work. That old porpuss ain't goin' to do it herself, so what's the next move? Do you tumble?"

"No."

"She's goin' to look out for a girl, an' I'm goin' to 'ply for the situation."

"You! Demy?"

"Yes, me Demy. I make a 'way-up gal. I played Susan, the Virtuous Chambermaid, in a show onc't."

"I am afraid they would discover the sham, and, honestly, Demy, I believe they would have your life."

"Chestnuts! Have my life! I ain't that style. Fu'st thing ye know I'll be mashin' Jasper."

Hetty laughed, but again said she was afraid it would not do.

"You'll see. I'm goin' there to ask about a parrot that's got over into her nob's yard, an' I'll take the chance to ask if she don't want a girl."

"I'm afraid it is too great a risk."

"Risk nawthin'. I'll work the steer an' don't let yer mem'ry give out on de racket."

Hetty laughed, which delighted Demy, who was afraid she might grow low-spirited.

"I'll call 'round to-morrow or nex' day to let you see."

With this he vanished.

That afternoon Reginald Montmorency dressed himself elaborately and wended his way to Union Square.

"I'll be back early, Em," he said, "and I expect Gaubard will be with me."

"Very well."

Miss Fanny Hastings occupied herself in unpacking her trunk and arranging her room, while her hostess sat beside her and repaired stage garments, which she designated "props."

She was a woman of tolerable education and possessed a beautiful face, but her unwieldy figure was greatly against her in her profession.

Hetty was thankful to her for her kindness, and not nearly so hard to please as she formerly had been.

When her father left her she was a spoiled child.

Now she felt herself a woman—a woman, too, with no one to depend on but herself.

"What shall I do if my money gives out before my father returns?" was the question she asked herself constantly.

She was not well-educated, she could not teach, and she did not believe she was physically strong enough either for housework, or to fill the still more trying position of a saleslady, or seamstress.

The stage possessed attractions for her, and the taste was inherited, though she did not know it. Her grandmother had been an opera singer, but her father had never told her the story.

Her own mother died when she was born, so all the love of her heart had been given to her father.

Had Hetty's mind not been distracted by other trials she would doubtless have suffered more apprehension on account of that father's prolonged absence. Of course her anxiety was great, and more than once she had suddenly started from her sleep, cold and trembling, with the words of the unfortunate Maria Notting ringing in her ears:

"Your father is dead."

Could they be true, or was this a horrid fancy of the woman's diseased brain?

Hope is strong in a youthful heart and hard to kill, so Hetty hoped on.

If Demy's fantastic plan proved successful she would doubtless learn more, for the Nottings would be less guarded in the presence of a stranger than they were in hers.

In the afternoon the actress entered Hetty's room to announce the return of her husband, who was accompanied by his friend, Mr. Gaubard.

Our heroine felt little interest in this man until she saw him.

She anticipated meeting such another person as Montmorency himself and she was not prepossessed in his favor.

This man, however, was as unlike the stiff, artificial Montmorency as any one well could be.

He met Hetty with great cordiality, having heard as much of her history as Montmorency was in a position to furnish. Of course the actor's story was quite unlike the true one, being improved and embellished by that gentleman's vivid imagination.

Hetty's eyes were attracted by Harold Gaubard's fine form and handsome face, and unfortunately her knowledge of human nature was not great enough for her to recognize the difference between real and pretended nobility of character.

She elevated him into a hero, for she had never met any one who seemed so nearly to fulfill her ideal picture of what a hero should be.

It is an unfortunate fact that a bad man not unfrequently proves attractive to a good, pure-hearted woman.

Harold Gaubard did so to Hetty.

She was too young to realize her own feelings, but Gaubard was not.

He saw that this young and beautiful girl was attracted by his fine eyes and his manner, which contrasted so agreeably with Montmorency's stilted, stagy way of speaking and endeavoring to make himself agreeable.

Hetty, too, was so beautiful that Gaubard felt interested in her.

He talked of the stage intelligently enough, and agreed with Montmorency that she could easily enter upon a professional life with hope of success.

While he talked he kept his eyes fixed on Hetty's face, and she was at a loss to account for the puzzled expression they wore.

"Did you ever know any one by the name of Chamberlain?" he asked, suddenly.

Hetty's heart stood still, and she felt herself grow white and cold.

"No," she said, hoarsely—to save her life she could not have uttered another word.

"Oh, I asked because you bear a strong resemblance to a friend of mine by that name."

"Indeed?"

"Yes; extraordinary, in fact."

"You see such chance resemblances occasionally," put in Reginald Montmorency, and Hetty felt grateful to him for his interference.

Gaubard now said adieu, promising to repeat his visit soon, and Hetty felt that she had experienced a narrow escape.

If this man was a friend of her father's he must also know Notting.

Was it possible that he might protect her from him if she appealed to him?

Hetty felt that she dared not risk such a venture.

"How do you like Mr. Gaubard?" inquired the actor.

"I cannot say on such a short acquaintance," replied Hetty.

"He is a fine fellow, but I can't quite make him out. I heard to-day that he was not a writer, and some other hints that I didn't like."

"Yes?"

"Yes; people say he has been caught in some pretty crooked transactions."

"He does not look like that sort of person," said Hetty, for she had been interested in the handsome Frenchman till he alarmed her by his sudden question.

"No, my dear," chimed in Mrs. Montmorency. "He is a perfect gentleman."

"How in the world is it that that girl looks so like Chamberlain?" was the thought running through Gaubard's mind.

He determined to follow up the acquaintance, for Hetty was fair enough to interest his world-worn fancy.

Fortunately for her peace of mind, he was too much occupied by other schemes to carry out his resolve.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DEPARTURE OF THE CONSPIRATORS.

MADGE met her father next morning with a smile of defiance on her thin lips.

She felt certain his effort to obtain such a letter as he wished from Gaubard would prove fruitless.

To her surprise and chagrin her father sat down to his breakfast with an air of satisfaction and carelessly threw a letter across the table, saying:

"I saw Gaubard last night and told him all our plans. He has written you."

She tore open the envelope and read:

"MADGE, MY DEAREST:—

"The news that you are about to become the wife of another did not find me quite unprepared. I am poor and altogether unworthy of you."

"May you be happy in the exalted position you are so worthy to fill. Should yourself and father deem it right I should like to see you once more. I am in Union Square Park every day, and shall be there to-morrow between three and four. In case this is farewell, think of me sometimes amid your splendor."

"Accept best wishes from one who is unfortunate enough to love you without hope of having his love returned. Yours till death,

"HAROLD GAUBARD."

Madge folded the letter, replaced it in the envelope, and began to eat her breakfast as calmly as possible.

"Well?" said her father, looking up from his cutlet, inquiringly.

"I suppose you read the letter."

"I did not."

"Then do so now."

She threw it across the table, and Stacy perused it and frowned slightly when he saw the appointment the artful Frenchman had made.

"It's all right except that part where he tells you to think of him and hints to you to meet him in the Park," he grumbled.

"Nonsense! He gives me up and I sha'n't meet him at all," said the fair one, snappishly.

"That's right, my girl; I am glad you have so much pluck."

Stacy felt greatly relieved that the affair had been settled so easily.

"Now," he went on, "I must give you the wherewithal to prepare for your marriage. Most of your dresses can be got in London or Paris, but you must have some new things. Here is a little to begin with."

He handed her a roll of bills, which she accepted with sparkling eyes. London and Paris!

"Thank you, papa; of course we shall buy the bulk of my trousseau in Paris, but I need quantities of things."

"Supply yourself."

Stacy left his daughter free to enjoy her shopping while he sought his friend, Notting, to impart the glad tidings that the marriage was to take place.

The preparations occupied but a few days and then the party sailed for Europe.

Mrs. Notting remained in her home, however, and to her was intrusted the mission of safely disposing of Hetty Chamberlain.

Some days before the marriage the door-bell rung and the old woman answered the door.

"Please, ma'am," said a colored boy, "der am a parrot flowed ober your back fence."

"Stuff and nonsense!" replied the old lady, tartly.

"No, mum, it's de trufe. Won't you please let me s'arch fur um?"

"No, I won't. Get out; bringing people dancing to the door with your impudence."

"Tain't my fault, mum! De missus she was

cleanin' de cage an' out went de Polly, an' she done sont me."

"Well, go back and tell her I will not have my house dirtied up by a parcel of fools hunting for parrots. By the by, who is your mistress?"

"Miss Cavendish."

Miss Cavendish was a very wealthy and eccentric maiden lady who resided in the neighborhood.

Mrs. Notting knew her by sight, they attended the same church, and the fat woman reflected that now her son was to leave the country for good she might as well cultivate some fine friends, so she altered her manner at once.

"Why didn't you say it was Miss Cavendish?" she asked, apologetically.

"So I did, mum, jis' soon as you axed, mum."

"Oh! Well, as it is Miss Cavendish's bird, I am perfectly willing to let you go into the yard and search for it."

So the boy, who was our friend Demy, walked down-stairs and out into the yard, accompanied by Mrs. Notting, who made herself very agreeable.

It is needless to say no parrot was found, but the boy managed to inquire quite naturally, whether the old woman did not want to engage a good servant-girl.

"Why, yes, I do," she said, in surprise, "but I should prefer a white girl."

"The gal I refers to am white, mum."

"Yes?"

"Yes, she am a fu's-class gal. If Miss Celia Cavendish hadn't too much help already, she'd 'a' hired dis gal."

"Well, you may send her to see me. I'm afraid your mistress will find it hard to get her parrot back."

"Well, I'll go tell her how mighty xìn you wuz, mum, an' I'll send de gal 'roun'. When might you want her?"

"Right away."

"Well, missus, you'll fin' dat gal de bes' you eber seen, she's dat smart an' dat 'bligin'."

Demy retired delighted with his success, and the old woman was also in a good humor, for she saw her way clear to forming the acquaintance of the rich old maid, who was considered the most aristocratic person in the neighborhood.

The old woman had been introduced to Madge, who was too sharp and sarcastic to please her. The fortune could not be obtained without her, however, so Mrs. Notting was very polite to her future granddaughter.

Nothing had been heard of Hetty. The whole family were occupied by their plans, and felt secure in the belief that she was safe in her old home, where they could place their hands on her at any moment.

To the old woman was the task intrusted of getting rid of her!

She was equal to the work designed for her.

"Wait till you are off, Henry," she said; "I'll dispose of the proud, saucy jade. She has no money, and you know what Mother Lippeman is."

"Do what you like. She threatened to make a fuss over Maria, but you see she did nothing. Her bark is worse than her bite."

"I'll fix her."

The wedding-day dawned and the sun shone on the bride, who was arrayed in the finest garments she could secure. Stiff silks and glistening diamonds do not impart beauty where nature has been so unkind as she had to Jasper's wife.

They were not a handsome pair, and they began their married life with a wholesome dislike for each other.

Jasper had admired Hetty Chamberlain, and he cursed the "ill-luck," as he termed it, which gave him this thin, dark, evil-faced girl, instead of the one he had honored by his preference.

They left New York the same day, bound for England.

Of course, as the heirs to an estate, they traveled first-class, but on the same steamer a young man took passage in the second cabin.

He was not wealthy, but he determined to keep sight of the party.

The young man was Harold Gaubard.

CHAPTER XIX.

SAM INTERVIEWS A "FENCE."

Of course Sam Saunders saw nothing more of his French friend. He had watched his movements carefully, however, and knew that he sailed on the steamer Alaska, for Liverpool, and that the newly-married pair and party were on board also.

The detective possessed certain advantages over Gaubard. He knew what name Notting would claim for his daughter-in-law.

It would be an easy matter to pounce on him at any time, but first he must secure evidence of his crime in America and find the rightful heiress to the estate of Clanmair and old Sir Alywin Hetherington's fortune.

He had seen Howard on several occasions, but judged it best to keep him in the dark about the steps he had last taken and the latest information he had gleaned.

Like most men who know nothing of the slow

and tedious work it is to unravel such a plot as Notting's, Howard would spoil all by insisting on some rash move.

To move now was folly.

Sam Saunders had received the cognomen of the "Go-as-you-please Detective," from some of his brethren in the profession. They were envious of his success. He did not approve of rushing violently along a road that ended in a *cul-de-sac*, and sending abroad reports of his success in obtaining clews, until the perpetrators of the crime were fully posted on every move he made, as some detectives do whose zeal exceeds their discretion. He preferred to make haste slowly, and his record proved that his system was the right one.

Perhaps Frank Howard fancied he was making no progress. If so, he kept his opinion to himself.

He had instituted inquiries about Sam Saunders and learned that his success was almost phenomenal.

"The best man in the world in a difficult case," said a man whose opinion carried weight. "Slow, sure and quiet. You can't hurry him, and you can't hold him back. He is like a bulldog—when he takes hold he never loses his grip."

So Howard forced himself to remain quiet; he had plenty of letters of introduction, and he mixed in fashionable society as if he had not a care in the world.

He left everything in Saunders's hands, and that was just how Sam liked his principal to act.

He reported that he was making as much progress as possible and Howard seemed satisfied.

"I fear," said he, on the day Saunders interviewed him after the Alaska sailed with her precious cargo of villainy on board, "I fear these relatives of mine must be an uncouth set. If I could only fancy they were ladies or gentlemen I should not worry, but they must be the dregs of creation or they would have seen and replied to some of the notices published."

"You cannot tell," said Sam, evasively.

"Do you think they are in the United States, Saunders? I begin to fear that they are at the other end of the earth."

"I know enough to assure you the clew lies here in New York City."

"Do you? Then go on and let me know just as much or as little as you think best."

"Thank you. Without boasting, I believe I may say no one else can drive this case."

Sam parted from his employer with a pleasant feeling that Howard had full confidence in him.

Howard also felt satisfied. He knew the case was a difficult, almost hopeless one. The length of time that had elapsed since Hetherington left England had increased the difficulties of tracing his career tenfold.

Feeling assured that everything possible would be effected with as little delay as possible he left New York for a trip South, first instructing Sam to draw on him, through his banker, for any money he might require, and insisting on leaving blank checks in the detective's hands for that purpose, though Sam assured him it was unnecessary.

"Now," said Saunders to himself, "I shall give my attention to searching for the murdered man's daughter."

He rested assured that he had the murderer just where he knew how to find him. Now he must obtain evidence to the crime and find the real heiress to the property.

One more visit must be paid to an old resort of theirs with the object in view of obtaining Notting's address.

On a side-street near Eighth avenue and Gansevoort street in a private house, there lived an old woman whose business was that of a theatrical costumer. This was her legitimate business; but she was also a "fence," or receiver of stolen property.

Mrs. Mendal was rich and daily growing richer.

She owned horses and wagons which were often used by burglars to carry off their booty, and was well-known to the police, who never could convict her, however, as she was both liberal with her bribes and cunning in her dealings.

Mrs. Mendal was a well-educated German, and a great fondness for the theatrical world as well as a love of gain were the inducements which caused her to enter the business she was engaged in.

She was a childless widow of some forty odd years, and her fortune had been large before she opened her costume warehouse. She was therefore in a position to supply much handsomer wardrobes than most of her competitors in the trade.

She also had ventures in the dramatic line; not that she ever engaged in the business personally, but she was an adept in picking out persons who were calculated by nature to become successful on the stage, and to such her terms were liberal in the extreme.

Many a star would have blushed unseen to the end of her days behind a counter or toiling over a sewing-machine had not the worthy Mrs.

Mendal found dresses, jewels, yes, and even money to place her on the boards.

These ventures had always proved fruitful, so she was still interested in this branch of her business.

Sam Saunders knew her well, and she was acquainted with him in at least half a dozen disguises.

She knew him as the captain of a barque who was always going to sell her smuggled goods, but never did. It had never come in Sam's way to "pipe" Mrs. Mendal, so he had let her alone.

Now he sought her in the hope of obtaining some information, and he found her at home.

She sat in her back parlor drinking her tea when Sam walked in. He was dressed in shabby garments and looked like a variety man down on his luck.

She received him politely, and he sat down and poured forth a pitiful tale. He had been taken away out West by a company who stranded, and had to travel back on his "uppers" with scarcely a bite to eat from Leadville to New York.

"And what do you want with me?" asked the lady, looking up from her meal of grilled chicken and hot biscuits, inquiringly.

"I have often heard how you set other fellows up, and I thought you might help me."

"Ah! that is the way; the more people do the more they are expected to do. Do you think I am related to Jay Gould or Vanderbilt?"

"No; but I know you get your money back."

"Sometimes."

"I have a friend, or rather I had a friend, who would help me if I could find him."

"And why don't you?"

"Well, I wish I could. He gave me his address, but I've lost it."

"What's his name?"

"Jasper Notting."

"You can find him by going to No. — Willett street; the house is in the alley."

"I've been there, but they say neither Jasper nor his father have been there lately."

"If you write a letter I can send it to him. I never furnish private addresses."

The conversation was interrupted here by the entrance of the girl who took charge of the show-room.

"Mr. Montmorency wants to see you, ma'am."

"Very good. Show him in."

Saunders rose.

"You need not go," said Mrs. Mendal; "it is not private business."

Reginald Montmorency walked into the room, followed by a young lady who was dressed in black and wore a thick veil.

"Good-evening, madam," saluted the actor, bowing low.

"How do you do, sir?"

It was evident that the acquaintance was an old one.

"I have recovered my health, but am unfortunate enough to be out of an engagement."

Reginald's answer did not appear to surprise Mrs. Mendal; she was used to hearing such news from her clients.

"I did not, however, call on my own account," resumed Montmorency, "I wish to awaken your interest in my young friend, Miss Fanny Hastings. She has marked talent and a strong wish to enter on the life of a professional."

"Will the young lady allow me to see her face?"

Hetty removed her veil. Sam Saunders was not interested in the aspirant for histrionic laurels, but he did admire a beautiful face.

He started when he saw Hetty's face, for, in addition to its rare beauty, his keen eyes marked the resemblance which Gaubard had observed.

"Can it be possible that girl is the one I am in search of?" he asked himself, and listened attentively to the questions and answers which passed between Mrs. Mendal and the girl.

Hetty told her age, acknowledged that it was the necessity for some means of procuring a living that suggested the stage, and added that she had neither experience nor money.

"Very well," said Mrs. Mendal, "go home and you may hear from me."

Hetty looked her disappointment, but the actor gave her an encouraging glance.

"Your address?" added the lady on whom the girl's hopes depended.

It was freely given. Mrs. Mendal wrote it down.

The detective made a mental note of it.

"That will do," and the actor and Hetty were dismissed.

"Now as for you," she remarked to Sam, "I want to know why you are looking for Jasper Notting."

Her eyes were fixed on Saunders's face, but he bore the scrutiny well.

"Didn't I tell you?"

"You told me you expected him to help you?"

"Yes."

"Well, I think you spoke in a foolish manner. Jasper Notting never did help any one in his life, and he never will."

"Do you think so?"

Sam spoke as if deeply disappointed, and he did it so naturally that Mrs. Mendal was deceived in spite of her shrewdness.

"I know it. He is a mean cur."

"But he owes me some money and he can't refuse to pay me."

"He can and will refuse. I have done business with his father and I know them well. Do you happen to know what they have done with Rusty?"

The detective was glad to see that she took him for one of the gang.

"No, I've missed him. Is he wanted?"

"He was, a while ago. I wish I knew where he was. I have some work for him."

"Shall I find him for you?"

"Yes, if you can. Now about Jasper. If you tell me what you expected him to do I'll do it and save your wasting your time asking him."

The detective was nonplused. He knew Jasper had gone to Europe, but he fancied he had left behind some relative or friend who might afford him some clue to the whereabouts of Chamberlain's daughter.

"I need a little money, that's all."

Mrs. Mendal took out her pocket-book and handed the detective two ten-dollar bills.

"Pay them back if you do not find Rusty. If you do, I shall consider you have earned them. Now go; I expect people on private business."

She never even inquired his name. She was a strange woman and a keen judge of character. Half her business success was owing to her knowing just whom to trust.

"Rusty has disappeared. Some of the gang say he is dead."

Sam pondered over this. It was the answer he got to an inquiry made an hour or two later. He was in a portion of New York which not even many thieves know—an underground portion of the Bowery, which had numerous outlets, known only to desperate criminals and one detective, Sam Saunders.

Daylight never penetrated its shadowy corners. The only entrances and outlets were through the floors of basements occupied by men whose lives as a general thing were forfeit to Government for their crimes.

Murderers lived here. One man whose crime had been committed in broad daylight not many blocks away from his hiding-place. Under the feet of throngs the red-handed murderer lay hid.

A crime so bold that the city was startled when it was discovered, but no one had ever hunted down the murderer.

The room, if such that long damp tunnel could be termed, was lit by oil-lamps, and a few men sat at wooden tables, while others lay on benches, sleeping.

It was not an inviting place of abode even to hunted criminals; but life is sweet, and many a time the gallows had been robbed of its lawful prey by this dismal shelter.

Sam Saunders looked the most disreputable of the whole party; his face was almost covered with a scrubby beard of apparently some ten days' growth, and his bristling eyebrows and deep red face and neck made him look like a sailor of a villainous character—a regular desperado, ready for anything.

"So Rusty is dead? I'm sorry to hear it. I am looking for him."

"Got a job on?"

"Yes."

"Can't one of Rusty's pals take it on?"

"Guess not. Anyhow you couldn't. You're wanted, ain't you?"

"Yes, it— But Slim there is out of work."

As the man, who was a terrible-looking fellow, with one eye and a fearful scar across his cheek, spoke, there came from a corner a loud murmur.

"Who is there?" asked a man who sat near the foot of the ladder by which the guests of this hiding-place descended from the upper world.

He was a stern-faced man, and no one ever found courage to treat him with anything but the greatest deference.

"Arch Snooks from Willett street," was the reply, and the misshapen dwarf was granted permission to descend.

"What brings you here, beauty?" asked Bulber, the man at the foot of the ladder.

"I came to warn you."

"Warn me of what?"

"Sam Saunders is busy piping a case."

"What?"

A number of the men sprung to their feet, and hands were busy searching for weapons before Arch had done speaking.

"He came to our place with Notting and pretended Phil Burr sent him. He called himself Murdock, said he came from Chicago, and was a queer cole maker."

"And how do you know it is Sam Saunders?"

"Cause Phil Burr is in New York, and he says Sam Saunders is the man. He says he never knew a Koniacher by the name of Murdock, or looking like this fellow. Sam Saunders

knows his fist. He is alamort, and sent me to awake you."

Buller looked around him apprehensively.

"Well," he said, "as this alarm is a serious one, I'll ask every gentleman present to submit to a search. Of course I think every one is all right, but it is best to be certain."

It appeared to the detective that he fixed his eye on him.

For the first time in his life Sam Saunders was caught in a trap.

CHAPTER XX.

PLAYING THE LADY WITH A VENGEANCE.

MESSRS. SHEFFIELD & GRUBE were seated in their office one bright spring morning when one of their clerks handed in a card.

London was singularly unlike itself. The sun shone and the air was clear and balmy. The office mentioned was in Old Jury, where legal firms are pretty numerous.

The partners were both elderly men, with solemn faces and stiff manner, which constantly reminded their clients that time was money, and that every word which passed their lips bore a cash value.

"Astonishing!" said Mr. Sheffield, as he perused the name on the card and handed it to Mr. Grube.

That gentleman put on his eyeglasses and read:

"MRS. JAS. ELKINGTON,

"Formerly HENRIETTA HEARINGTON."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Grube. "Show the lady in, Page."

The lady entered. She was dressed in deep mourning and accompanied by two gentlemen.

"Take a seat, Mrs.—ah! Elkington."

"Thank you."

"Madge threw back her heavy *crêpe* veil and sat down. Her husband remained standing. His father did the same."

"Your father, or rather I should say—"

"My grandfather, Rupert Hearington?"

"Hum! Yes."

"Is dead. My father is dead also. His death was recent. That of my grandfather occurred ten years ago."

"Yes—I presume you will experience no difficulty in establishing your identity?"

"I think not. Here are the papers my father gave me before his death."

She handed them to the lawyers, who examined them carefully.

"Everything seems regular and in order," admitted Mr. Sheffield, "but a little delay will be necessary of course."

"This is my husband," said Madge, indicating Jasper, who stood looking somewhat uneasy.

"Indeed?"

"And I am his father," added Notting, who began to think it was high time he asserted himself.

"Indeed?" repeated the stately old English lawyer.

"Yes; I presume we shall hear from you soon. We are at the Langham."

Mrs. Elkington rose; she knew that Notting intended her to bring the visit to a close.

"Very good. We shall examine those papers at once and inform you of the result. We were the late Sir Alywin's solicitors."

"And will continue to take care of Mrs. Elkington's affairs?" asked Notting.

The lawyer bowed. He seemed anxious to abstain from committing himself.

With cool ceremony the party left the office and entered the carriage which was in waiting for them.

"Well," said Madge, "if that is the way we are received, it is evident that people consider us impostors."

"Nonsense! That man is a lawyer; you did not expect him to go into ecstasies over you, did you?"

"No, I expected nothing; but he looked to me as if he was suspicious of us."

"And to me also," added Jasper.

"You are a pair of cowards," growled Notting, harshly.

By this conversation it will be seen that the party were not on the best of terms, as was certainly the case.

Madge had ruled her own father, and she ruled Jasper; but her influence over Notting was not great.

They were antagonistic, and both realized it. Notting was accustomed to command, but he could not command this girl, who was endowed with the cunning courage, or rather boldness, of a rat at bay.

He ground his teeth when he met her sharp, resolute eyes. He knew he would never master her. He felt that he had made a vast mistake in confiding his plan to these two—Madge and her father.

To a certain extent he had placed himself in their power.

Jasper had succumbed to his wife's strength of will and was powerless, and Stacy was little better.

"Cowards!" repeated Madge, scornfully; "I do not consider it cowardice to be aware of danger."

"There is none."

"You should say in your opinion, Mr. Notting," retorted the girl, impudently.

She knew the cards were in her hands, and she was determined Notting should know it also.

Notting was too angry to reply, so the rest of the drive was passed in silence.

Two days after, a communication was received from the legal firm acknowledging the heiress of Clanmuir, and informing her that a call from her would be esteemed a favor.

All the preliminaries were soon arranged, and Madge was installed as the lady of Clanmuir and the mistress of a large fortune in her own right, and the despicable woman would have been happy had not her triumph been marred by the constant presence of Notting.

As was natural under the circumstances, the conspirators did not continue in good-fellowship very long. Stacy, of course, took sides with his daughter, and Jasper was completely under the influence of his wife. He felt no affection for her, but her strength of mind was greater than his, and hers was undoubtedly the ruling spirit.

The arrival of the new representatives of the Hearington family created considerable stir in their new home, and numerous visits were paid them by members of the aristocratic families in the county.

These visits were delightful to Madge. She exhibited her costumes and strutted about in the manner which she deemed appropriate to the lady of Clanmuir.

She excited no small measure of astonishment in the minds of the staid ladies and gentlemen, who were forced to believe that such were the manners and customs of American ladies.

"I do not like Mrs. Elkington, and I detest her husband and those other men," said a duchess.

"She is the essence of vulgarity," replied the wife of an earl, who had accompanied her grace to Clanmuir.

"A shame! Such a noble family, so old a family! How fortunate that Erskine Hearington has the title! He is a gentleman."

Madge found the cold shoulder of the nobility very cold indeed, and she tired of Clanmuir very soon.

"I am going to Paris," she decided, and Notting's eyes flashed as he heard her.

"Paris?" he repeated. "Why do you go there?"

"Because I'm sick of this place. It is dull as ditch-water, and all these Scotch people are made to match."

"You soon tire of your grandeur."

"Oh, no! I mean to be grander than ever, and gay also."

"Hum! There are limits to your income."

"Yes, there are so many to live on it; but when Jasper and I have it to ourselves it will go further."

She spoke coolly, for she had already determined to shake Notting off. She forgot how completely she was in his power.

"You look forward to the time when your father and myself die, I presume?"

His tone was as cool as her own, but his face was deadly pale, and his eyes glittered ominously.

"Yes, I suppose so," she replied, carelessly, and turned away as if the man whose crime and cunning had placed her where she was was unworthy of notice.

Stacy also seemed displeased. His brow wore a frown and he scarcely replied to Madge's light conversation.

A few days later the whole party left Clanmuir for the Continent. Madge repaid the cold ceremony with which her noble neighbors treated her by leaving all their visits unreturned.

In vain Notting protested. With a woman's keen intuition she read the disapproval of the proud, high-born dames in their patrician faces, and resented it in her own fashion.

"You have insulted the county," said her father-in-law, while they were on the train bound for London.

"I don't care; I am not coming back there."

"Indeed?"

"No, I shall live where I please."

"Certainly."

"And no one can make me do anything else."

Notting looked at her as she thus defied him. He knit his brow, but said nothing.

The passage from Dover to Calais was a rough and stormy one. The thick fog obscured every object on deck, and the tossing of the sea soon drove the passengers below, with a few sea-hardy exceptions.

"I wish a little private conversation with you, Stacy," said Notting, as he saw his friend prepare to follow his daughter and her husband down the companionway.

"Very well, I shall soon join you on deck."

He only waited to put a thick overcoat over his ordinary clothing, and without waiting to

bid his daughter good-night, ran up without difficulty and stood beside Notting.

The latter looked somewhat pale and nervous, but Stacy did not remark the fact.

"What do you wish to say?"

The two men were no longer close friends. Their ill-gotten fortune came between them.

"This," said Notting, as he led his companion forward till they stood where the bow of the steamer cleft her way through the tumultuous waves; "your daughter has adopted a manner which I do not intend to put up with."

"She is as she has always been—self-willed."

"A little too much so. You must check her."

"I cannot. She knows she is mistress of the situation."

"Perhaps not so much as she fancies."

"What do you mean?"

"What I say. I have borne her insolence too long and will bear it no longer."

Stacy was roused by his tone. They were alone and Notting looked threatening.

"I tell you we can do nothing. The girl is young and foolish. She knows we are powerless to prevent her from doing as she pleases."

"We are not powerless. I shall quell her proud spirit."

Stacy shrugged his shoulders.

"With your assistance," added Notting.

He was busily occupied drawing something from his pocket, and Stacy felt alarmed.

What was to hinder this man from shooting him dead?

The slippery length of the ship was between him and the man at the wheel, and most of the crew were below. He glanced around helplessly.

"I'll tell you my plan," resumed Notting.

"Go on."

"Madge is unbearable, and Jasper is quite as bad; you are your daughter's heir-at-law in the event of her death."

"Well?"

"If anything should happen to these two, matters could easily be arranged between you and me."

"Notting!" exclaimed Stacy, pale with anger; "do you dare to hint to me that it would be advisable to put my own child out of the way?"

"Certainly; I am willing to do the same by mine."

"You!" cried the other, contemptuously, "you are a murderer by profession and instinct."

"And you are quite willing the results of my acts should benefit you and yours."

"At all events I will not stain my hands with blood."

The fog was thicker than ever, the sea tossed and moaned and huge masses of white foam rolled away on either side of the huge black hull as the ship plowed her way onward.

Notting gave a quick glance around him, and Stacy noted it. He turned to escape from what he felt to be imminent danger, but he was too late.

Notting's arms were about him, his strong right hand pressed upon the other's lips. The hand held a cloth saturated with chloroform, and the victim's struggles gradually became fainter.

In a few moments he fell across the arm that grasped him, weak, supine and completely insensible.

Notting raised him and placed him on the railing.

No one was near. The fog hid the forms of the two men from any other mortal who might be on deck.

A hasty thrust of his hand, a heavy plunge in the tossing flood.

It was over.

So quickly done. So silent, and so sure.

In another moment the murderer was below in his state-room.

He poured out a goblet of brandy and swallowed it at a draught. He then took a vial from his pocket and thrust it out of the port-hole, and, this done, he threw himself on his bed and slept soundly.

CHAPTER XXI.

ASSUMED CHARACTERS.

DEMY lost no time in carrying out his project of engaging himself to Mrs. Notting as a maid of all work.

He made a few purchases, and then arrayed himself in a dark calico dress, short drab sacque and tall hat with a number of red feathers.

He surveyed himself with pride and satisfaction in a three-cornered piece of looking-glass which was fastened to the wall with tacks, and remarking:

"Ain't I a daisy?" strutted out of the house, and soon after rung the door-bell at Mrs. Notting's residence.

The old woman appeared.

"Please, ma'am, I'm the girl a colored boy spoke about."

"Well, are you strong and accustomed to housework?"

"Strong! You can bet your life. At least, I mean yes, ma'am."

Demy felt that he must be more careful, for

Mrs. Notting's fat-incased eyes looked as if they were lit with the fire of suspicion.

"Very well. I am at present living alone. I expected you before my grandson's marriage."

"Yes, ma'am, but I was out of town for a week."

The truth was that Demy's funds were too low to admit of the purchase of his disguise, and not for the world would he have let Hetty know that fact.

"Well, I may have a girl come here to stop. She is out of her mind and my son is her guardian, so I shall keep her here."

"Gracious! I hope she ain't dangerous?"

"Oh, no; besides, I shall keep her shut up."

"All right, ma'am; I'm scared to death of crazy people."

"You need not have anything to do with this girl. She is very ill, too, and I don't think she'll live long."

Demy's keen glance marked the evil glitter in the fat woman's eyes, and he felt how narrow Hetty's escape had been.

"When can you come?" asked Mrs. Notting.

"To-morrow, if that will suit."

"All right. To-day I'm busy."

The boy made his way to Hetty's new home and related what he had learned.

The girl could not suppress a shudder, when she realized how terrible a fate had been before her when she was a prisoner in the hands of the vile old woman.

"I'll try to get out every evening while I am there and let you know what happens."

"Very good, Demy, but I am really ashamed of giving you all this trouble. You must let me pay at least something."

"Now, look here, Miss Fanny, I'll git mad right off if you keep on talking about payment."

"Demy!"

"Well, 'scuse me, but you can't 'sult me wu's nor hurt my feelin's more than by lettin' on I ain't your friend."

Demy's eyes flashed under his shaggy bang, and gay hat and feathers.

"Letting on you are not my friend," repeated Hetty, in astonishment; "why, Demy, you are the only friend I have in the world."

"Thank you, Miss Fanny; now I ken do 'most anything. Don't never talk about pay, or I'll git mad."

"Well, I will not, Demy."

Hetty made up her mind that when her father returned she would reward the boy in some manner that could not give offense, and Demy bade her good-day.

She was growing anxious to obtain some employment, for she fully realized the abject poverty of her host and hostess. They seemed quite dependent upon her, and the actor built great hopes on Mrs. Mendal.

"We shall hear from her, depend upon it," he said, encouragingly.

The proof of his assertion soon came. Mrs. Mendal wrote to Hetty requesting her to call upon her.

"I shall go with you myself," she said, when the girl made her appearance, "to speak to a friend of mine who has experience in such matters; if he thinks well of it I will furnish you a wardrobe and procure an engagement after you have taken a few lessons in elocution."

Hetty thanked her, but her gratitude did not seem to impress Mrs. Mendal.

They soon arrived at the house of the friend.

He lived in a somewhat shabby flat in Sixteenth street, and was an elderly, oddly-dressed man whose sharp gray eyes seemed to look through whoever they were fixed upon.

"This young lady wants to go on the stage, Rafferty," said Mrs. Mendal, when they were seated in the parlor and the old man had exchanged greetings with that lady.

"Yes, yes; they all want to do that," grumbled Rafferty.

Hetty's heart sunk.

"She has a good face for the profession."

"Yes, her face is good. What about her voice?"

"Sing something," said Mrs. Mendal.

"I am no singer."

Hetty spoke sadly, she feared the confession would prove the death-warrant of her hopes.

"Hum! No soubrette parts for you then, and I hardly know what else you are fit for. You are very young."

"Think it over, Rafferty; see your friends and let me hear from you."

Rafferty fixed his sharp eyes on Hetty for a moment and bowed.

"I'll let you hear, madam," he said, and in another moment Hetty and the fence were in the street.

"Go home," said Mrs. Mendal, not unkindly, "I think Rafferty will report favorably. I'll let you know."

The girl returned to her home feeling very much discouraged.

To her surprise she found Demy awaiting her.

"I've got a letter for you," he said, as soon as they were alone, for he had warned Hetty not to trust too implicitly in Reginald Montmorency or his wife—not that these worthy

people would injure her intentionally, but they were not in Demy's opinion "fly enough" to keep secrets.

"From my father?" asked the girl, eagerly.

"Naw," replied the boy, who was sorry when he saw the deep disappointment she felt expressed in her face.

"It is a letter to the woman at the place where you uster live, and Mrs. Notting she's got a room fixed up fer yer. She's nailed the window tight and put a big bolt outside the door. Oh! she's a first-class daisy."

Hetty's cheek grew pale.

"This letter is to your old landlady, and I was to take it, 'cos the old woman said if you saw her you wouldn't come. I was to tell you that a gentleman was at Notting's house lying very ill, and you must not lose no time in coming."

"Great heavens!"

"That's so; but read the letter."

To Hetty's amazement he tore it open and handed it to her.

"Why, Demy, that is a serious thing," she exclaimed. "Don't you know it is illegal to open a letter addressed to another person?"

"Bah! Who cares for old Mother Notting? Besides, it ain't as bad as locking you up in rooms. I ain't goin' nigh Sixteenth street, and she'll never find out I opened the letter."

Hetty thought as the letter was opened and the mischief done she might as well benefit by reading its contents. She did so; then to Demy's consternation fell insensible on the floor.

CHAPTER XXII.

SAM'S NEW PAL.

SAM SAUNDERS looked about him in a dazed sort of fashion. No trace of alarm was visible on his face, however—that was too thoroughly trained to its use as a mask to express any feeling which the detective wished to conceal.

He felt that no time was to be lost, so he stepped briskly up to Buller and said:

"As I'm a sea-faring man, and don't come here so often as the rest, it is only fair to begin with me."

A murmur of approval ran through the place.

Buller's face, however, wore a suspicious frown.

"What brought you?" he asked, gruffly.

"To see old friends for one thing, and to find Rusty for two," said Saunders, in a confident manner.

"What do you want with Rusty?" growled a gruff voice from a dark corner.

"Mrs. Mandel told me to hunt him up for her."

"Is that so? Has he said anything about this to any one here?"

"Yes, he's straight as a line," asserted the one-eyed man who had been conversing with Saunders when the arrival of Arch Snooks interrupted them.

"Arch, come here."

Buller caught the dwarf by the arm and dragged him forward to the full glare of a lamp.

"See that man?" said he, pointing to the detective. "Size him up. He ain't the man who came to Willett street, is he?"

Arch's swivel eyes glared at Sam, who stood perfectly cool, returning his look calmly.

"No," decided the dwarf. "The other feller's ten years older'n this one, an' he's four or five inches taller, too."

This seemed conclusive.

The detective felt that he probably owed his life to a habit he had of wearing boots by the means of which he could alter his height considerably.

He also assumed a round-shouldered stoop on occasions, and by increasing the breadth of his shoulders by pads made himself appear a much shorter man than he was.

"Did you say, mister, that you was looking for Rusty?" inquired a man, coming forward from a secluded corner.

He was followed by a large white bull dog, and his face was partly concealed by a large green shade worn over one eye.

"Yes, I have a good job for him if he can take it on."

"Then let's hear what it is, for I'm the man."

"Why, I heard that you were dead."

"Well, I ain't."

"I'm glad of it. Mrs. Mendal wants you immediately."

"Is that so?"

"It is she paid me to find you, and as I've done it I'm willing to stand treat for the party, if the captain here is willing."

"I've got no objection," said Buller, who still regarded the detective with ill-concealed suspicion.

"How shall I obtain the budge?" inquired Sam, producing some of the money which the fence had given him.

"Arch can get it."

"Gentlemen, name your wishes," said the detective, "and when we have drank together I propose a game of cards while Rusty goes to see Mrs. Mendal. I'll stop here till he returns,

so that you may be quite certain I act in good faith."

There could be no fault found with this action, and even Buller's doubts began to clear up.

Arch soon returned with the liquor, and Rusty shortly after set off to visit Mrs. Mendal.

Sam Saunders sat down to a game of poker with some cut-throat-looking wretches, with an air of keen enjoyment.

Rusty's stay was not lengthy. He returned and informed the party that the new man was "straight as a line."

Feeling certain that all danger was over, the detective determined to spend the night where he was.

His object was to try and ascertain if Rusty knew anything about the murder of Chamberlain.

With this object in view he did not fail to stand treat for the whole company, till they voted him a good fellow and lost all doubts of his being what he represented himself—one of the "fraternity."

When they lay down to sleep like pigs in straw, Rusty, by the detective's invitation, remained up to smoke a good-night pipe with him.

"I hear," began Sam, cautiously, "that Notting and his son have left the city. Gone to England to inherit a fortune."

"What?"

Rusty sat up so suddenly that the bull-dog started nervously and growled.

"Quiet, Spot!" said his master, and the evil-looking beast lay down.

"They have gone to England," repeated Saunders, his eyes fixed on Rusty, who evidently knew something on the subject.

"The darned mean skunks!"

"Stacy has gone with them; his daughter is married to Jasper."

"Well, I swan!"

"You seem surprised."

"Yes, I'm beginning to drop—tumble. See here! did you happen to know a crook who called himself Chamberlain?"

"I've heard of him."

"Well, it is his fortune they're goin' to inherit."

"How is that?"

"Chamberlain was a crook, but he was a gentleman in some ways. If I'd ever 'a' thought of him when I heard that cat-boat story I'd have squealed if I was lagged for it."

"Cat-boat story!"

The detective's eyes were full on Rusty, but he neither spoke nor moved.

"Yes, cat-boat story. You see, I got into a little trouble and I knew that a leaky cove had squealed and the flycops had me dead to rights. Notting told me it wouldn't fadge, and I'd better amputate, and I did. I was at Seabright, and Notting and some others of the gang came to see me once or twice. Chamberlain was there one day and I thought he was telling ghost stories. He told me a fortune had come to him and his daughter, and he said Notting knew it, and he was afraid he'd blackmail him when he got to be a top-sawyer. He said: 'Mark me,' (he wasn't much of a fellow for flash or pathos), 'mark me, that Notting is a big scamp, and I believe he gave you away and wants to keep you here for some purpose of his own.' I told him I guessed not, but he kep' me on pins and needles. He walked up and down and said his girl was too young to trust, and moreover, he didn't want her to know what kind of life he had led, and he gave me a box which he said contained papers, which I was to keep till he called for them. While we were talkin', who should come along but Notting and Jasper. They all went away together an' I never saw Chamberlain since."

"Did you see the others?"

"Yes, they came one day and hired my cat-boat and came back to say they capsized her. They paid for the boat and I never tumbled to anything wrong till I saw a poster with a reward offered for the arrest of the murderers of a mar who was found floating in a cat-boat off Sandy Hook."

"And then?"

"I called to see Notting."

"How did you find him?"

"I had the address from Jasper."

"How did he happen to give it to you?"

"I found him in a bad state one night."

"Drunk?"

"Yes, and worse."

"What?"

"He had robbed a man who was more sober than himself, and I begged him off, gave the man his money back and took Jasper home."

"He told you where he lived?"

"Yes, he'd have been taken in if he didn't."

"What did Notting say?"

"Told me I wa' a fool. To go back to Seabright and keep my mouth shut."

"And you did so?"

"Yes. For one thing I was wanted. For another he paid me."

"He did?"

"Yes."

"But you have never seen Chamberlain since?"

"No."

"And never parted with the box?"

"No."

"Where is it?"

"Buried."

"What do you suppose it contains?"

"Papers to prove who he was."

"Then how could Notting inherit his fortune if you have the papers?"

The detective was growing suspicious.

"Because Chamberlain carried about with him copies of the 'documents,' as he called them."

"But the originals?"

"Are in my possession."

"Well, Notting is now in the enjoyment of the fortune."

"I guess so. Mrs. Mendal sent for me to tell me that Notting had turned stag. I thought Chamberlain was bouncing when he talked, but he was dead to rights."

"Mrs. Mendal said so?"

"Yes."

"I know she hates the Nottings."

"She has right."

"Well, what do you intend to do?"

"I've told Mrs. Mendal all about the lay. I shall round on Notting, for he rounded on me."

"What does she think?"

"As I do. She says they murdered Chamberlain and are living on his money."

Rusty looked sad, if such a countenance as his could express so fine a feeling. Sam was curious to know why.

"It was a shame," he said, sympathetically.

"Shame! I should think so. To keep me down there in that dead-and-alive hold, without a drop of budge or a right sort of a fellow to patter with!"

"Yes."

The detective realized that Rusty was thinking not of the murdered man, but himself.

"Such pals as them I don't want."

"What are you going to do next?"

"Mrs. Mendal and me settled that."

"But won't you take me on?"

"Well, I don't know you."

"Don't leave me in the lurch; it's low tide with me."

"That's so?"

"Yes."

"Well, you are a Knight of Alsatia. Blowed if I'll throw off on you."

"I risked my nouse-box to come here among flash pals and tip you a wink."

"And so you did. Well, I'll ask her nobs if you can stand in with us."

"Do."

"As for me, I'll follow Notting wherever he has gone. I'll git square with him. To go and put me in a hole like that."

"Why did you trust him?"

"Well, he was the topping-cove of the gang."

"Is that so?"

"Yes; don't you know that?"

"No; I haven't much to do with them."

"You had a close squeak when Buller put that little rat of an Arch onto you."

"Oh, I didn't mind; I knew I wasn't the man he wanted."

"Well fur you. If Sam Saunders ever showed his nose in this ken he'd never git out alive."

"I suppose not."

"He's the devil. I hate him worse than the lower regions. I'll get even with him before I die."

"I would, if I was in your place."

"You kin bet your life on it I will."

"How do you go after Notting?"

"Madam posts the cake."

"But Notting is too fly to let you pinch him."

"I'll follow him up and down the world till I lag him."

"But there is one person you have forgotten."

"Who is that?"

"Chamberlain's daughter. If Notting is in possession of her father's fortune it should be restored to her."

"I never thought of that."

"Well, it seems to me that you will not get any good of the money any other way."

The detective knew the character of such men as Rusty too well to appeal to his sense of what was just and right.

"That's so," he muttered, "but how can I produce her when I don't know where she is?"

"How would it do for me to find her while you go to England and find Notting?"

"I dunno. I'll ask madam."

With this answer Sam had to be content. He now determined to leave the place, but first he must ascertain when and where Rusty could be found.

"I'll have to mizzle," he said, "for my old woman'll know the barque is in, an' if I don't show up she'll raise my wages when I do put in an appearance."

"So you're a married man?"

"Yes, you must call an' see me."

"Where's your ken?"

Sam handed him a card on which was written an address.

It was the number of a house where he had some rooms.

"Come there soon," he said, "the old woman'll treat you decent. When can you come, so I'll be in?"

"I want to see the madam. She ain't to be trifled with, an' I can't make no promises till I do."

"I wouldn't like to miss you."

"No, and I wouldn't like to miss you. I'm paralyzed with that notion of yours 'bout Chamberlain's daughter."

"Have you examined the papers he left with you?"

"No; why?"

"They might give some clew to her whereabouts."

"No, they are all about the old country."

"Did he never speak of the girl?"

"Often. You'd think she was a angel out of heaven to hear him."

"How old is she?"

"About sixteen I guess."

"But he never told you where she was?"

"No, he was scared to death that his gal would find out he was a crook. Notting knew her though."

"It is strange he did not make her marry Jasper."

"Maybe she wouldn't, and he put her to bed with a shovel."

"I hope not."

"So do I. Well, we'll have the satisfaction of getting Notting laid by the heels anyhow for murdering Chamberlain."

"If you can prove it."

"I'll do it. If one man was dead I wouldn't be afraid to go forward and see that cat-boat."

"Who is that?"

"Sam Saunders."

"Couldn't we lay for him and fetch him?"

Rusty replied with an oath.

"I never saw him," resumed the detective, "but I guess he is only a man."

"Then you miss your count. He's the devil."

"What makes you think so?"

"Look here. He is only thirty years old, but he's scragged more fellows than I can count, and he has more coves down on him than all the cops and beaks in the United States, but he is so blamed fly no one can down him."

"I'd like to try."

"Tip me your daddle, my bene cove."

They shook hands energetically.

"See here, Rusty, I'll undertake to get Sam Saunders out of the way if you'll go partaers and give me my regulars."

"If you do all the crooks in the country will be your partners."

"Well, I don't want to bounce, but I'll give you my hand on it Sam Saunders sha'n't bother you while you are my pal."

Rusty gazed fixedly in the detective's face and there read such firmness and resolution that he was well-nigh convinced that his new friend was to be depended on.

"Down him, an' I'll be your partner for life," he said.

"All right. Now when shall I see you?"

"Can't you come here?"

"Way, I'll tell you. I'm wanted for a little job and I ain't fond of streets."

"All right. You'll see me to-morrow night."

They parted; the detective returning to his lodgings, Rusty to his heap of straw."

CHAPTER XXIII.

A GIRL'S ALARM.

STACY was not missed till the steamer arrived in Calais, the following morning. Then his daughter, not seeing him on deck, sent her husband in search of him.

Jasper soon returned with the information that his father-in-law was not to be found any, where on board.

"He has landed," said Notting, carelessly. "Come, we had better follow his example. I'll attend to the custom-house people, while you, Jasper, take your wife to the hotel."

"But papa?" queried Madge, who had been very sea-sick, and who was anxious to get to some bed which would remain stationary enough for her to sleep away a violent headache.

"He must be among the crowd on the pier. I'll bring him along."

He told his son which hotel to patronize, and saw the couple drive away.

He then attended to the baggage, which he sent to the hotel.

His next move, after visiting a barber-shop, was to breakfast at a neighboring *café*.

Feeling refreshed and strengthened, he walked leisurely to the hotel.

Jasper stood on the steps.

"Where's Stacy?" he asked.

"Is he not here?"

"No."

"I thought I'd missed him, and, after searching everywhere, came on."

"I haven't seen him."

"Where is Madge?"

"Sleeping. She was very ill all night."

"Well, let her sleep. It is strange about Stacy."

"Very. When did you leave him?"

"Oh! soon after you went below."

"Did he know what hotel we intended to stop at?"

"Yes, that was settled some time before we left England."

"Well, I hope he'll turn up before Madge wakes, or there'll be the deuce to pay."

"Why?"

"It seems she did not want him to go on deck again, and she'll be sure to say he fell overboard."

Jasper's eyes, small and dark as those of a ferret, were fixed on his father's face.

Notting stood the scrutiny well.

"Fell overboard!" he exclaimed, contemptuously; "one would think you were speaking of a child."

"Well, Madge holds onto a notion when she takes one."

"Let her."

He lit a cigar and handed one to his son.

"Let us go for a stroll," he suggested, and they did so.

Madge was not sleeping, though her husband had asserted that she was.

A strange chill feeling had come over her as soon as she set her foot on the steamer to leave England.

A premonition of coming evil oppressed her and partly overcame the poignant agonies of sea-sickness.

Directly her husband left her she rung the bell for a servant, and a pretty girl, who spoke no English, appeared, much to Madge's disgust.

(Of course a smattering of French had been numbered among the girl's accomplishments, and equally of course it did not prove available now.)

"Send some one who speaks English."

The lady spoke as angrily as if the chambermaid was to blame for being a Frenchwoman, and she gladly went in search of the housekeeper.

That lady was informed by Madge that she wished to see Mr. Stacy the very moment he arrived.

"Certainly, madam," said the housekeeper, and gave orders to that effect.

Fatigue overcame anxiety in Madge's case, and she slumbered for hours and woke to find Jasper seated by the window, gazing out into the street.

"I want to see papa," she said, without replying to his inquiry on the subject of her headache.

"All right. I'll see if he has come in."

"Was he out?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Why didn't they send him up as I ordered?" Jasper looked confused.

"Do you mean to tell me papa has not come yet?" cried the terrified girl, springing out of bed, pale and trembling.

"He had not when I was down-stairs," he stammered.

"Great heavens! And you have done nothing?"

"What was I to do?"

"Inform the police—do anything instead of sitting with your hands folded."

"My hands are not folded."

"Well, go at once and raise an alarm."

"And what will your father say when he walks in all right and finds there is a hue and cry raised?"

"I don't care; it will serve him right for frightening me so."

"You are nervous or you never would act like this."

"What time is it?"

She was dressing hastily, but her hands trembled so that in her case most haste was truly, least speed.

"Four o'clock."

"And he has not come?"

"No."

"Then I believe he never will."

"What?"

"You may start and stare, but I believe my father is dead."

"Pshaw, Madge; nonsense!"

Jasper had grown pale, but he tried to assume an easy and careless manner. She was dressed now, and turning to her husband said, haughtily: "Let us find your father. There is no danger that he will be missing."

"I'll call him," and Jasper, glad to get away, started in quest of the elder villain.

"Hush! You do not need to inform every one in the hotel of our private business," he snarled, shutting the door hastily.

"I shall inform the whole world if he does not return at once," and her eyes flashed the anger she felt.

"Be calm, and do not make a fuss over a matter which may turn out all right."

The two men sat down and tried to seem unconcerned, but Madge continued pacing up and down, restlessly.

"What did you want with my father when you called him back after we had gone below?" she asked, suddenly pausing in front of Notting.

"I merely wanted to smoke a cigar in his company."

"I do not believe you."

"Thank you."

"Oh! you need not assume any airs with me; I know you too well."

"Why do you suppose I wanted to speak with your father?"

"I do not suppose anything. I suspect you threw him overboard."

She was now calmer than she had been; and the suddenness of the attack disconcerted Notting slightly.

"You must be mad!" he said, but his face turned visibly pale.

"You are already a murderer, and he was in your way."

"By Heaven! madam, this is too much!"

Notting sprang to his feet with clinched hands and flashing eyes.

"Deny it as much as you please. The fact remains!" was her defiant answer.

"Your father is no doubt safe and well. When he returns you shall apologize to me for this accusation."

"Perhaps I will. Now I am going to notify the police of his disappearance."

She threw the door open and swept out of the room, leaving father and son staring at each other helplessly.

"Did any human being ever act so like a fury before?" asked Notting, in pretended amazement.

"That's nothing. I've given up trying to control her, and you had better do the same."

"Oh! I sha'n't trouble myself," said the murderer, carelessly; "but you had better follow her, for goodness knows what she may say to the officials."

"If she says to them what she did to you, you may be arrested."

"Very likely. She is capable of anything."

"I wish Stacy would turn up."

"So do I."

"Do you think there is a probability that anything has happened to him?"

"How can I tell? It was a rough night; the decks were slippery."

"Yes, but the railing was high."

"No matter. He was ill; he may have fallen overboard."

Jasper turned and faced his father.

"Do you mean—"

"I mean nothing."

Notting spoke impatiently.

"I shall go out for a walk," he said.

"See here," exclaimed Jasper, detaining him by the arm, "I want to know the truth. Stacy would have called for help if he fell overboard."

"Well, so he may. No one could hear him."

"Great Heaven! Do you think he is dead?"

"Yes; I do."

With a strange look on his face the son released his hold on his father's arm. He did so in such a manner that it seemed as if he were repulsing him.

Without another word they parted, the father descending the hotel stairs, the son remaining in the room with a look of alarm on his bad face.

Meanwhile Madge had hastened away with a rapid step, as if she feared they would follow or attempt to detain her.

As she was hurrying along she was suddenly brought to a standstill by hearing her name pronounced by a familiar voice.

She stopped in surprise, and found herself face to face with Harold Gaubard!

"Why, Madge," he exclaimed; "how odd to find you in *la belle France*!"

"Not odder than to find you," she replied, with her old-time sharpness; "but, hush! Where can we go to talk? I have a long story to tell you, and I am in trouble."

"Come with me, then."

He led the way to a small hotel, and as soon as they were seated in a private parlor Madge requested him to order wine and refreshments.

"We landed from the Dover boat this morning," she explained, "and I was ill all the way over. I have tasted nothing to-day and am faint."

As soon as she had taken a few oysters and a glass of wine she related her story. She did not suspect for a moment that the whole tale was familiar to her hearer, and that he had followed her from New York. How could she know?

"Why, this is a terrible business, Madge," he declared, in apparent horror. "A conspiracy to defraud, and I don't know what all!"

"Oh, pshaw! I don't care about *that*," she said, impatiently; "tell me what you think has become of my father."

"I cannot say, Madge. You firmly believe that Notting murdered Chamberlain?"

"I do."

"Then unless your father turns up safe and well I believe with you that he has been done away with, too."

"Good Heavens!"

"You see, he was in Notting's way. The more partners there were in this business the smaller his share of the boodle would be."

"Then he and his snake of a son will murder me next."

"I shouldn't wonder if they did."

Madge sat in dumb terror. She was not without natural affection for her father, but self-preservation is the first law of nature, and the thought of her own danger was for the time being the strongest feeling in her mind.

"We must ascertain whether your father ever landed from the boat. That will be difficult, as most likely she has already sailed on her return trip to Dover."

"And if we find he has not?"

"Then the fact is he was made away with on board the ship, or fell overboard."

"Oh, dear," cried Madge, wringing her hands; "what will ever become of me without him?"

"Can't say," said Gaubard, gloomily. "It is your father's own fault for marrying you into such a murderous crowd."

"Ah! dear; don't speak ill of him, perhaps he is dead," sobbed Madge.

"Well, I won't if you don't like it; but he would not let me marry you because I was poor, and see what is the result."

"It is dreadful—terrible. I shall never go near them again."

"You must. Jasper is your husband and can compel you."

"Can he?"

"Certainly! Besides, they have all the money! What could you do without a cent in your pocket?"

"I have money with me, and can write to my banker for more, but of course I am married to that detestable wretch."

"Yes; and according to English law whatever is yours is *his*."

"How horrible!"

"It is. I firmly believe your life is in danger."

"Of course, they will kill me, and then they will have all the money. What shall I do?"

"Let me see. Suppose we go and consult a lawyer?"

"Yes, come; right away at once."

"It is fortunate you met me, for the lawyers, with few exceptions, speak nothing but French."

"Yes, I expected trouble, but I was so desperate I did not care. I felt that I must do something."

"Did Notting offer to set any inquiries afloat?"

"No, he ridiculed the idea."

"Now, Madge, you must make up your mind just how much or how little you intend to give away."

She looked puzzled. In the first excitement of her alarm she felt like telling all, but as she grew calmer her love of wealth asserted itself and she reflected that this would not be judicious.

"What shall I tell them, Harold?" she asked.

"There must be some way for you to protect yourself from the Nottings. Suppose you tell the lawyer all that has just happened, except the fact that Stacy was your father. Say he was a kind relative. Tell him you are afraid they may next attempt your own life."

"But," said Madge, with all her old shrewdness, "they may insist on an investigation and the whole story may come out."

"Then what are we to do?"

"I shall tell the detective whom the lawyer recommends more, but meanwhile what can I do to protect myself?"

"Make your will, and leave everything you have away from Jasper and his father."

Her face expressed approval, but still some doubts obtruded themselves.

"Further, engage me as your private secretary and insist upon it that I shall travel in company with your party. Engage a maid too, and never remain in the room alone with old Notting. Jasper can be coerced into subjection."

"Yes, I can easily manage him."

"The fact that they will lose instead of gaining by your death will prevent them from poisoning you, and my presence will be a protection in case they try to bulldoze you into making a new will."

"Good; but must I let them escape unpunished for the death of my poor father?"

"We will see. In the first place, we do not know for certain that he is dead. He knew Notting well, surely he would be on his guard with him."

"Yes, he knew him, but he may not have suspected he intended to injure him."

CHAPTER XXIV.

MEETING A WOLF IN DISGUISE.

JASPER found Notting in the lower hall.

"Madge is wild. She wants to see you," he explained, sullenly.

"All right; lead the way."

Madge was waiting for them; she was in street costume, and her face was pale as death, but her eyes were ablaze with excitement.

"What have you done with my father?" she demanded peremptorily of Notting the moment he appeared.

"Well, I think we had better set out on our mission."

They searched the Directory and selected a lawyer.

"Why not apply to the police at once?" inquired Madge.

"Oh! there will be less publicity this way."

Gaubard had a far deeper reason for his advice. He cared nothing about Stacy, nor felt the slightest interest in his fate. All he had to depend upon was his hold on Madge, and he determined to make the most of it.

He was the heir to be named in her will, though he had not suggested this to her as yet.

CHAPTER XXV.

A NEW DEAL IN THE GAME.

WHEN the lawyer's office was reached, Gaubard had to act as an interpreter, and so altered Madge's tale to suit himself.

"Ah!" said the man of legal lore. "The lady is nervous. Good! Is the lady rich?"

Madge, appealed to, furnished a list of her possessions, which she carried about with her, for her love of wealth was her ruling passion.

The lawyer looked surprised, and sat down near his new client, and instructed her, through Gaubard, how to make her will.

"But, how about my father?" asked Madge.

"Monsieur Brenton says we had better employ a detective whose name he will give us."

In truth, Gaubard had not mentioned one word of Stacy's disappearance. He next proceeded to do so.

The lawyer looked mystified, and Gaubard spoke lightly of the matter, which he said might prove to be a mistake on the part of the lady.

"Probably the gentleman will turn up all right," he said, reassuringly, "but the lady is nervous."

The lawyer now proceeded to draw up the will and inquired the name of the legatee.

"Oh! Madge, to whom are you going to leave everything?"

The girl was puzzled.

"Of course it is only a form," said Gaubard; "any name will do so long as it is not Jasper or his father."

"Have him put your name there."

Gaubard shrugged his shoulders and smiled carelessly.

Two clerks were called to witness the signature, and Gaubard withdrew, as he was the heir and must not be present.

All formalities being over, the lawyer accepted his fee with many bows and smiles, and his clients departed after inquiring the name of a detective upon whom they could rely.

"Here is your will, Madge," said Gaubard; "if it was not for our anxiety I should feel disposed to laugh at the idea of your making one."

"It is no laughing matter," she replied, looking very grave. "Where shall I keep it?"

"I don't know. Have you no secure place?"

"How can I tell? Jasper has keys of all kinds and would not hesitate to use them. You had best take charge of it."

"All right. I am bound to protect you at all hazards."

"I am thankful I met you. I felt that something dreadful was about to happen directly I set foot on that steamer."

"Let us hope your fears were unfounded."

"No; I am sure my poor father is no more; how fearful it seems; I cannot realize it."

The detective was a small, alert man, who spoke English.

Madge related the tale of Stacy's disappearance, clearly, but briefly.

The detective seemed to think lightly of the case, and suggested that the lady would find her friend at the hotel on her return.

"You will not neglect to institute inquiries, I hope," she said, after paying a liberal gratuity. "Spare no expense, for I am really attached to the gentleman and my means are liberal."

The detective promised faithfully to carry out her commands, and added that he would do himself the honor of waiting upon her in a few hours.

"Are you satisfied?" asked Gaubard as they were once more in the street.

"Partly so, only a hope still lingers that I may find papa safe at the hotel. I shall feel the disappointment keenly if I do not."

"Yes, suspense is hard to endure. I wonder how the Nottings will look when they see me?"

"They will be dangerously angry, but obliged to conceal their feelings!"

When they arrived at the hotel Madge led the way to their private parlor. Neither father nor son were there.

Too impatient to wait, she rung the bell.

"Has Mr. Stacy arrived yet?" she asked the servant.

"No, madame."

"Send either of the Mr. Nottings here."

"Mr. Notting the elder is out."

"Tell the other his wife wishes to see him."

In a moment Jasper appeared. His face wore an expression of pleasure till he caught sight of Gaubard.

"Oh! it's you?" he ejaculated, in a disappointed tone.

"Yes, it is me. I met your wife, who was much worried by the unaccountable absence of her father, and accompanied her to the office of a skilled detective."

Jasper's face blanched. He glanced uneasily at Madge. He knew she had left the hotel in a passion, and trembled when he saw that her companion was one of his old associates from New York.

Had she confided the whole story to the Frenchman?

Gaubard's first words raised the doubt, the next ones confirmed it.

"Madge has let me into the secret of your little speculation," he said, coolly, "and as my financial affairs are in a somewhat fishy condition, I proposed myself as a member of your party in the capacity of private secretary."

"You must ask my father," Jasper said, uneasily.

"There is no occasion," replied Madge; "I have promised Harold the position."

"Very good— Ah! Here is my father."

Notting stood before them looking strangely unlike himself.

His son started up, exclaiming:

"What is wrong?"

CHAPTER XXVI.

HETTY'S ACQUISITION.

DEMY'S experience among fainting ladies was not great, and here he had one on his hands. He was afraid to call the actress or her husband, for, as he said to himself, Hetty might give something away as she came to.

For this reason he preferred to trust to his own unskilled efforts to restore her to consciousness.

He threw water into her face, slapped her hands and exhorted her to "set up."

This vigorous treatment soon caused her to feebly open her eyes, sigh deeply and finally inquire:

"Is that you, Demy?"

"Yes, it's me; what made you go off dat way?"

"Ah! the letter," she gasped; "my father!"

"But I tell you that letter ain't from your father 'tall. I seen the old woman writin' it."

"Yes, but she says my father is dead."

Demy's face fell.

"Well, if I'd a' known that I wouldn't have opened the blame old letter."

"It is no more than I expected," sobbed the girl, "and Maria told me the same, but now I am certain."

"Well, well, don't cry, miss; it's a awful pity he's dead, an' a darn shame, but there ain't no help fur it an' we-all got to die, though I don't see why decent people die off so sudden an' tomato-can bums lives to be Methursalers."

"Ah! Demy," resumed Hetty, not hearing his attempts at consolation, "do you suppose those wicked wretches killed him?"

Demy reflected. He hated above all things to see girls cry, and especially this girl, whom he regarded as his own particular *protégée*.

He thought, shrewdly:

"If she gits mad she leave off crying an' feel better," so he said emphatically: "Course they did. Now what we got to do is to have them hauled up fur it."

"Let me see the letter again," said poor Hetty, despairingly.

"Read it out, please, miss, and then we'll know what it means better."

"It is addressed to Mrs. Lippmann. Why she must be as bad as the Nottings."

"So she is, if not wu'ss."

"Mrs. LIPPMAN:—Please let the bearer see Hetty Chamberlain, who left here and returned to your house. She has no doubt related a wonderful story to you, for she is not a safe girl to have under any roof where there is anything going on. My son's wife Maria is dead. It is a great relief to herself and every one else. My grandson is married to a wealthy heiress and sailed for Europe with his wife, her father and his father."

"Chamberlain is dead, but the girl does not know it, so tell her her father has come back and is lying ill at our house. The bearer, who is a sharp girl, will confirm whatever you say, and when I once more get her in my hands she won't trouble you nor any one else again. Don't be afraid to name your price for this and past favors. Look very carefully in whatever room Chamberlain occupied while Hetty is packing, and if you find any papers of his give them to the bearer. He was taken off rather suddenly and may have left something behind."

"Call and see me soon. I have news for you I don't care to put on paper. Your friend, MARTHA NOTTING."

"There!" exclaimed Demy; "they killed your father as sure as there's a day in the year."

"I fear so," said Hetty, sadly, while tears flowed down her cheeks.

"Look here. She speaks 'bout papers. Now your father may have left some if he thought he was comin' back."

"I scarcely think so; but it is possible."

"Well, fix that letter up ag'in an' I'll take it. If the other old pelican gives me any papers I'll bring them here, an' I'll tell Mother Notting that you ain't there."

Hetty reflected. If these wretches had any hand in taking her father's life this letter would be important evidence against them.

For this reason it would be well to retain it. Demy's advice, however, was good. In case her father had left any papers in Mrs. Lippmann's house she must certainly try to obtain possession of them.

"I should like to keep this letter," she said, doubtfully, "and still I ought to have the papers, if my father really left any."

"That letter 'd do to take to court," Demy decided; "but I'll tell you what to do. Git a piece of paper and copy it. Write as much like the old woman as you can."

Hetty felt that this advice was good enough to be acted on.

She sat down and copied the letter word for word. At first she experienced some difficulty in imitating the handwriting, but after a little practice she succeeded fairly well and the result was satisfactory.

"Now off I go," said Demy, triumphantly, "and I'll bring you all the partic'lers."

With a sad and heavy heart Hetty awaited his return.

At length he came—still, of course, wearing his disguise. His face was flushed and he was breathless.

"Here, miss," he said, and thrusting a bundle of papers into her hand he sunk breathlessly into a chair.

Hetty opened the parcel, which was tied up in an old newspaper.

"I'm so hot an' played-out I kin hardly talk," gasped Demy.

"Wait and get your breath. I'll examine these papers meanwhile."

They were a somewhat untidy collection of old letters, some in envelopes and others loose; but all more or less ragged and frayed, and the writing of most of them faded and indistinct.

"These letters were all written in England, over thirty years ago," said Hetty, thoughtfully, "and they seem to have been addressed to the same man, Rupert Herington."

"Didn't you never know any one by that name?"

"Never, Demy."

"Well, that's funny. I'd stick to them if I was you."

"I intend to; anything that was my father's is dear to me for his sake. Oh! Here are some old-fashioned portraits."

"Great Scott! So there is, an' golly! ain't that lady like you!"

The lady was like her, singularly so. Her hair was curling about her face and was bright yellow; her round face was fair, but the great laughing eyes were black as night, the brows and lashes of the same ebony hue.

It was a good likeness of a remarkably pretty woman in a by-gone style of dress which displayed a round throat and plump shoulders and a pair of lovely arms.

"Is she like me, Demy?"

"As like as two peas, miss. Ain't she your mother?"

"No; my mother was dark; I have some of her hair."

"Well, maybe if you read the letters you'll find out who she is."

"I intend to do so. What did Mrs. Lippmann say when she read the letter?"

"She was mad, 'cause you wasn't there."

"Did she write an answer?"

"No; she found that parcel and told me to say she was in trouble for money to pay her rent."

"Well, Demy, I suppose you had best deliver her message."

"Yes; an' if her nobs gives us any money we can hook it."

"Oh! no; that would never do."

Demy's face fell.

"I don't think nothin' is too bad to do to her," he grumbled.

"Perhaps not. Now let me see you soon again, and I shall be able to tell you what the letters are about."

"All right. I guess I best go now, fur old Notting 'll wonder what kep' me."

"It is well Mrs. Lippmann did not write, for she would certainly have mentioned these letters."

"Yes, she had an awful hunt for them, an guess where they wur?"

"I'm sure I cannot tell. I searched my father's room when I packed and found nothing."

"Up the chimbley!"

"What?"

"Pon me word! There wus a summer front, and on the ledge back of the chimbley wus the bundle, wrapped up in a piece of oil-cloth."

"How strange!"

"Yes; but a fu's-rate place to hide anythin'."

"A secure place, but the fact of that parcel being left there proves that my father meant to return."

"Of course 'e did. Now I'm off!"

Demy hastened away, and Hetty sat down to study the letters which had so unexpectedly fallen into her hands.

CHAPTER XXVII.

SAM IS "THROWN" ON HIS QUEST.

"WELL," said Sam Saunders to himself as he awoke the morning after his adventurous night in the Bowery, "I've gone through considerable, but this is the first time I ever promised to get away with myself."

He was well satisfied with the result of his interview with Rusty. The clew afforded by that worthy was an important one, and Saunders hoped it would be the means of placing a rope around the neck of Notting.

The next move was to ascertain where Chamberlain's daughter lived. Sam reflected on the face of the girl he had met in Mrs. Mendal's house.

"I'll find out who and what she is," he said; "she resembles the man in the cat-boat, and she has a look that reminds me of Doctor Howard."

It would be an easy matter to find out all about her, for Sam remembered the address Hetty had given Mrs. Mendal. He fancied too that the girl's face had a sad, careworn expression, easily accounted for by what must be to her the uncertainty of her father's fate.

"If I only had the box Rusty spoke of," thought Sam, "I should be justified in asking the girl some questions; but, as it is, it would be a shame to trouble her unless I could do some good."

In order that he might not be losing time, Sam took a walk in the direction Hetty mentioned when Mrs. Mendal inquired her address.

By a few skilled inquiries he learned a little about Reginald Montmorency and his wife.

A Dutch grocer was his informant. Mr. Jaeger said they were "first-class peoples, but vearful shlow in baying der bills."

"They have a young lady with them?" inquired Sam.

"Yaw, she vas de shyster of Mrs. Montmorency."

"Her sister! Are you sure of that?"

"Bud yaw."

"Who said so?"

"De frau her own self."

"Ah! I thought she might be only a lady friend."

"Nien, she is de shyster."

The passion theatrical people have for claiming relationship with perfect strangers threw Sam off the scent. Chamberlain's only daughter could not be the sister of any one.

Still he was not completely baffled. He determined he would not give up the battle easily.

So he rung the bell and inquired for Mr. Montmorency.

A very untidy girl informed him just how many flights of stairs to climb, and retired to her own apartment in the basement.

Sam knocked at a door and Mrs. Montmorency appeared.

"Can I see Mr. Montmorency?"

"He is out, sir."

This was a polite fiction. The great tragedian was at home and indulging in the luxury of a nap.

"You are Mrs. Montmorency, I presume, madam?"

"I am."

"You have a young lady staying with you at present?"

"Yes. My sister Fanny on a visit."

"Ah! Your sister?"

"Certainly. From Hartford."

"I was in search of a young lady, but she is, I believe, a native of New York."

"Then it can't be my sister. This is the first time she was ever here."

"Indeed? Then I need not trouble her. Good-day!"

"Good-day."

"There!" exclaimed Mrs. Montmorency, as she returned to the room where Hetty sat, "I got rid of him nicely."

"Thank you, dear; but don't you think it would perhaps have been better for me to have seen him?"

"No, indeed! What are you thinking of, child? Why, that is one of your enemy's myrmidons, and they may be going to try and kidnap you, as they did in the 'Haunted Heart'—such a lovely drama, full of bloody-minded relations."

Hetty reflected. Now that she was certain her father was no more, no one could be in search of her except the Nottings.

Perhaps they were employing men to hunt through the city in hope of tracking her.

This was unlikely, however, for they supposed her to be at Mrs. Lippman's house, for, of course, Sam Saunders's visit took place before Mrs. Notting ascertained from Demy that the girl had escaped from her clutches.

It must be some other girl the man was in search of.

With this reflection Hetty dismissed the subject from her mind, and Sam also relinquished all idea that the girl he had met in the house of the fence was Chamberlain's daughter.

"It is a chance likeness, such as we often are puzzled by," he said, and thought no more of the matter.

He arranged to meet Rusty at the address he had given him, and in order that he might be in a communicative mood he laid in a good stock of liquor.

He had almost given up all hope of seeing him, and had come to the conclusion that the crook had altered his mind or taken the alarm, when he heard a footstep stumbling up-stairs. On opening the door he found Rusty staring vacantly at him.

The dog followed at his heels, and appeared the most respectable of the two.

"Well, guv'nor," said Rusty, lurching forward and dropping into a chair.

"Good-evening. I began to be afraid you were not coming."

"Yes, comin' fast 'nuff. Got 'n'thing to drink in place?"

"Plenty."

The man was in such a condition already that it was useless to attempt to obtain any information from him. If he fell asleep he might wake up sober enough to talk.

Accordingly Saunders set out spirits, water and glasses.

Rusty helped himself liberally and then fell fast asleep, his dog at his feet.

Sam Saunders knew his slumbers would in all probability last for hours, so he took up a book to kill time, and began to read.

He was afraid to go out, as the crook, if he woke up and found himself alone, would most likely take his departure, and all the trouble the detective had taken to find him would be thrown away.

There was nothing for him but patience, therefore, so he sat reading while the evil-looking scoundrel filled the room with his snores.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

TRYING TO LEAD RUSTY.

THE master slept, but the dog was wakeful; he sat blinking his red eyes at the detective as if he mistrusted his intentions in regard to his owner.

In truth, had not the animal been there, Sam would have been tempted, in thieves' parlance, to "go through" Rusty. As it was, he knew the savage brute's nature too well to attempt any such rash proceeding.

At length Rusty yawned, stretched himself and finally opened his eyes.

He had slept himself comparatively sober, and he stared at Sam with owl-like dignity.

"How long have I been here, cully?"

"About an hour."

"Well, it's dry work sleepin' an' talkin'."

Rusty had not exerted himself much in the conversational line, but Sam did not contradict him.

"There's good whisky before you; help yourself."

"Won't you join?"

The question was asked as if he felt a certain amount of suspicion, and the expression of his face reminded Sam of the dog Spot, who still glared fiercely out of his red eyes.

"Certainly, but I have been helping myself pretty liberally while you slept."

They drank and Sam observed that there was a change in the manner of the crook.

He felt distrust of his new friend, that was evident.

The detective was so accustomed to dealing with such characters that the difference struck him at once. He knew, however, that his best policy was to ignore it.

"I've been to see the madam," resumed Rusty, pulling Spot's ears nervously and glancing sideways at Sam.

"Indeed? She is a fine lady."

"Yes. She's all right, but she's sharp, I tell you."

"She needs to be, dealing with so many different characters. She has, like yourself, a poor opinion of the Nottings."

"Is that so?"

"Yes. Did she speak about your new project?"

"Why, yes; that's what I went to see her about."

"Did you mention my idea of finding the girl?"

"I did."

"What did madam think of it?"

"Well, she says, like you, that we can't do nothin' without her."

"That is true. We might be able to dislodge Notting and deprive him of his ill-gotten gains, but we could not lay claim to anything."

"Just so. The only thing I don't like is what madam said about you."

He seemed half-frightened, and Sam saw that it was Mrs. Mendal who was the cause of Rusty's new-born suspicions.

"About me?"

The detective assumed a face of astonishment and spoke in a tone to match.

"Yes; to make a short story long she thinks you are Sam Saunders himself."

Rusty sat bolt upright with a look of drunken wisdom.

"Great Scott!" cried Sam, after he had indulged in hearty laughter.

"I knew she missed her count this time, an' I told her so," said Rusty, looking relieved.

"Missed her count? I should smile out loud if she didn't! Did you tell her I promised to do the cuss up?"

"Yes, and she said you was giving me a steer."

"Nonsense! Besides, didn't Arch say Sam Saunders was at the booth?"

"He did."

"Didn't he say he brought a fakement from some case in Chicago to the flash-panny?"

"He did so."

"Well, did I funk?"

Rusty protested he did not and emphasized his assertion by an oath.

"Didn't I offer up to him an' ask them to go through me first?"

"Yes, you did."

"An' didn't Arch say the man he saw in Willett street was four or five inches taller than I am?"

"By jingo! so he did!"

"You forgot that, I suppose?"

"So I did, clean forgot it."

"Well, I guess you're too smart a man to believe I can make myself four or five inches taller than I naturally am."

"I guess not."

"I might wear a wig, or paint my mug, but I couldn't alter my hight. Besides, Arch Snooks is as keen as they make 'em, and he said Sam Saunders was playin' it in Willett street as a queer cole maker. He seen him and he likewise seen me! He took us all unawares, an' you ken say if I was took aback or quenched."

"No, you wasn't."

"Well, Rusty, what is the madam givin' us?"

"She's onto the biggest lay she ever was onto, an' nat'rally she don't want to be fouled on it."

"Am I the man to foul her game?"

"I guess not."

"I should think not. Why, I was the first one who said we'd have to find the girl. Wasn't I?"

"Yes, you was."

"I don't expect to reap much benefit, unless the girl dubs up handsome—which she may do, an' she may not."

"That's so."

"All I ken do is to find her. She's got to make her bargain with you an' the madam. For the madam finds the sugar an' you've got the papers."

Rusty saw the situation, but Sam resumed: "As for me, I'm out in the cold if any of you chooses to queer on me. It ain't my game an' I ain't goin' to play it. I went to Buller's for to find you, and I didn't know you till you spoke to me. Madam named you to me and I don't see what's eating her now."

He had taken on an injured tone and manner.

"Come, now," said Rusty, cheerfully, "I wouldn't say no more if I was you. Madam is touchy, an' how ken she help it in her business?"

"That's so, but I'm helping her. You told me the story of your own accord, and I only offered to help you."

Rusty now was all apologies.

"You're straight as a line," he said, "an' I'm in with you."

"All right. To-day I looked up a girl I was sure was the right one, but it seems like I was wrong, or else she wouldn't trust me."

"What put you up to trap?"

"I'll tell you, so you'll see I ain't been idle. I went to the morgue an' got a picture of the man who was found in the cat-boat."

Rusty slapped his knee, with another oath.

"By gosh! You're a fly cove. Let's see the phiz-hog."

The detective handed him the photograph.

He regarded it silently for some minutes.

His rough face had paled and his coarse voice took a softer tone as he said:

"That's poor Chamberlain, so help me—!"

"I heard how he was found, too."

"How?"

"Shot dead."

"I thought as much. An' his pockets cleaned out, I s'pose?"

"No; there was money in his pocket and a good gold watch. He wasn't hushed for swag."

"No, not if he was rhino-fat when they squelshed him."

"He was, but there were no papers found on the body. Nothing that could lead to identification."

"Of course not. Notting took care of that."

"Well, there is no doubt on your mind that this photograph is that of your friend Chamberlain?"

"None whatsoever. I'd swear to it among a thousand."

"Then you can easily prove the murderer of Chamberlain to be Notting by identifying the cat-boat."

"Yes; but I'm funky to go near for fear of Sam Saunders."

"See here, Rusty; tell me where Sam Saunders is to be found and I'll engage to keep him quiet while you go and see the cat-boat."

"What will you do?"
 "I'll give him a steer and take him out of town."
 "If I was sure you could, I'd be in it."
 "I can and will."
 "All right, then."
 "When will you go?"
 "To-morrow, if that'll suit you."
 "Certain it will."

With an understanding that Rusty would call the next night and report the result of his visit to Sam, they parted.

"Well," said the detective, "of all the curious lays I was ever on, this is the queerest. I've promised to do for myself in order that I may keep a good character with my partner, who is one of the greatest scoundrels in New York. They may well call me the Go-as-you-please Detective. This beats all."

CHAPTER XXIX.

WHO IS MURDOCK?

"What is wrong?"

Notting sunk into a chair looking about to faint.

"What's happened?" again asked Jasper, somewhat impatiently, which was not strange considering how his nerves had been on the rack all day.

"Everything is wrong," replied his father, who took no notice of Gaubard's presence.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean I've just had a letter from my mother. There is the deuce to pay in New York."

"Yes? Go on!"

"The girl has disappeared, to begin with. Then my mother was foolish enough to hire a strange girl as a servant. She sent this girl to Mrs. Lippman's with a note telling her to search Chamberlain's room for papers. The servant returned to say the girl wasn't there and that Mrs. Lippman could find nothing. Two days after she went out and did not return. My mother got a little uneasy about this, but the next thing that happened told her how foolishly she had acted. Mrs. Lippman called and told her she found a large package of papers in Chamberlain's chimney."

"Well?"

Madge was the impatient questioner.

"Well, Mrs. Lippman gave them to the girl who never said a word about them."

"Perhaps she lost them."

"Perhaps she lost them." Perhaps she is a detective."

"That would be a nice business."

The whole party now seemed as disturbed as Notting.

"I thought everything had gone so well," he groaned.

"And here at any moment a cable message may reach the lawyers in London and burst the whole bubble."

"And all that cursed old woman's fault," said her dutiful grandson.

"Well, this is a pretty business!" exclaimed Harold Gaubard, as coolly as if he were a member of the family.

Notting for the first time realized that there was another cause for alarm in this man's presence.

He had been so thoroughly upset by his mother's letter that he had failed to notice Gaubard, who stood in the background.

"Where did you spring from?" he now inquired, sullenly.

"Madge met me and I am engaged as her secretary."

"Indeed? Well, I think she will not require your services very long. The bottom has about fallen out of the whole scheme."

"Nonsense! Don't lose heart so easily, man."

"I guess I know my own position best."

"Of course. I'll tell you what I should do in your circumstances."

Notting was thoroughly broken down by the new turn affairs had taken, so he listened to Gaubard with a certain amount of patience.

"What?"

"I'd realize every penny I could and skip as fast as lightning."

"That's all very fine, but see here. My banker may have already heard from New York."

"That's so."

Madge was so deeply concerned over the probable loss of her fortune that the loss of her father was for the moment forgotten.

"It is well we are not in Scotland," she said, "we might all have been arrested."

"That is true. This letter was, of course, addressed to the care of my lawyers and there has been some delay. It was first forwarded to Clanmuir and then here. Besides my mother did not suspect any danger till Mrs. Lippman called, long after the girl left the house."

"I am in hopes that your mother is needlessly alarmed. The girl may have lost the papers, and, fearing a reprimand for her carelessness, denied that she received them," said Gaubard.

Notting still looked exceedingly gloomy.

"Even then," Madge replied, "it will be almost as bad. We do not know what information the papers contained, nor whose hands they may have fallen into."

"Telegraph at once to your agent to sell the property and get all your securities turned into cash," suggested Gaubard.

"I shall do so."

Madge was the speaker. Notting looked at her in surprise.

For what had he schemed and planned, committed crime after crime, if this girl was to take the reins in her own hands after this fashion?

"You might say we will do so," he said, sarcastically.

"No, I might not. The money is mine. I will wire Sheffield and Grube at once to take steps to put the hateful old estate in the market."

Notting was silent, as he did not wish to be worsted in an encounter of wits with Madge.

She sat down and penned a dispatch which she handed to Gaubard without even reading it aloud.

"Go at at once, Harold," she ordered; "it will be best to lose no time."

He bowed and left the room.

"Now," resumed Madge, her face full of resolution, "I wish to say a few words. I know we are not what might be termed a parcel of saints. My father was the best of the lot, and he was not a Bible man. I firmly believe that he was murdered this morning, so I took steps to insure that I might not follow suit."

"What on earth do you mean?"

"I mean that I have made my will, so before you attempt my life make sure that you will benefit by my death."

"I believe you are out of your mind," said Notting, contemptuously; but she saw that her words produced an effect.

"No, I am in my mind. Now, what is to become of us if that old fool of a mother of yours has got the detectives on our track?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"Such a shame," broke in Jasper, "when everything was going so well!"

"And my father was out of the way," added Madge, with glittering eyes.

"Your father has done what he often did before," said Notting, angrily—"gone on a spree."

She was about to reply, but something in his look checked her.

Gaubard soon returned, and shortly after Notting and Jasper went out and left them.

"A pretty kettle of fish," grumbled the Frenchman.

"Do you suppose there is any danger?" inquired Madge, who was feeling ill and nervous.

"Yes, every danger. There is a man in New York who knows too much of the story."

"Who is he?"

"A counterfeiter named Murdock."

"Good heavens!"

"He talked matters over with me more than once, and he's got things pretty near 'dead to rights.'"

"Does Notting know?"

"I cannot tell. Now, Madge, if you get hold of the money, what do you mean to do?"

"Go somewhere and live on it."

"But won't you give the Nottings the shake?"

"I dare not."

"Why?"

"Because they would be revenged on me."

"How?"

"In the first place they could go to the police and lodge information."

"They could not without criminating themselves."

"I dread them."

"They are unmitigated scoundrels."

"Yes, they would stop at nothing, and they are so cunning. Notting told me just now that I was mad."

"What did he mean?"

"What he said, I presume. If he had me shut up in a mad-house he could do what he liked with the money."

"Nonsense, Madge; you have got morbid and lost all your spirit."

"Maybe I have; but think of my father!"

"It does seem strange that he does not appear."

"See here, Harold; you do not expect to ever see him again."

She looked straight in his face with keen, questioning eyes.

"Well, I hardly know what to say; what object could Notting have for making away with him?"

"The same he had for murdering Chamberlain."

"Oh! that was a different case."

"Not at all. My father once out of his way he could, he thought, do as he pleased with me."

Gaubard pondered. In all probability she was right.

If so, what line of conduct would pay him best?

He cared nothing for Madge. All he sought was money, by fair means or foul it mattered not; that was his "business" now.

"I think you are gloomy and inclined to exaggerate," he said, when silence had lasted some

moments. Her sharp ears caught a change in his tone.

Her keen eyes were fixed on his face, but it was impassive as a waxen mask.

"Harold," she said, "tell me more of this Murdock."

"Well, he is a counterfeiter, as I told you. He was introduced to the gang by Notting one night in Willett street."

"How did he come to confide in you?"

"I missed Chamberlain."

"And spoke of him?"

"Yes."

"Was Murdock a New York man?"

"No, he came from Chicago."

"Then what did he know about Chamberlain?"

"Nothing, but what I told him."

"And he formed his own conclusion?"

"Yes; he pieced things together and he guessed the whole story."

"Harold, that man was a detective."

"Nonsense," said Gaubard, but his face flushed uneasily.

He felt alarmed.

"You knew Chamberlain," resumed Madge, "did you know his daughter, too?"

"No."

"But you told this Murdock he had a daughter?"

"Yes."

"Then that is the girl who played the part of the maid and obtained possession of the papers?"

"I do not understand you."

"See here. This Murdock is a detective. He hunted up Chamberlain's daughter. She disguised herself and wormed her way into Mrs. Notting's confidence. All he waited for was proofs."

"Do you think so?"

"I do."

"Then the jig is up; but stop—did not Notting say something about another girl?"

"I believe he did, but I was confused and cannot be certain."

"I shall ask him what he meant."

He did not have an opportunity of carrying out his intention till next day.

CHAPTER XXX.

A NEW DIABOLISM.

IN the morning a dispatch arrived from Messrs. Sheffield & Grube announcing that Sir Ashley Hearington, who had inherited the title, would purchase the estate, at which Notting was much gratified.

"I heard of him in London," he said; "he has a large fortune from his mother."

"That is lucky," remarked Gaubard.

The conversation took place at breakfast, which had been served in the private parlor.

As the waiter was present no more private matters could be discussed.

Later, Gaubard introduced the subject of Willett street and Murdock.

"Where did you meet that man?" he asked, after exchanging glances with Madge.

"He came with a letter from Phil Burr. Why do you ask?"

"Because before I left New York I heard he was a detective."

Notting looked alarmed, but answered quickly:

"Nonsense! He is one of the smartest counterfeits in the West."

"I don't question his smartness."

"Who told you such stuff?"

"Well, I know he was making all sorts of inquiries on the subject of Chamberlain and his daughter."

There was no question about it now. Notting and his son both looked thoroughly alarmed.

"Can it be possible?" he said to himself.

"I fear so; but you mentioned something about some girl who had disappeared."

"The servant?"

"No, some other girl."

"Hetty Chamberlain."

"Why, do you mean to say you knew her?" exclaimed Madge.

"Yes; she was in my house for a long time after her father's death."

"Then you told a falsehood when you assured me she was in some other city, you did not know where?"

"Probably I did," he rejoined, coolly.

"Why didn't you marry Jasper to her instead of me, and then you would have been safe?"

"That was the best plan and the first one I tried."

Madge's eyes flashed. So she was not his first choice as the wife of his son!

"Why didn't you carry it out?" she snapped, viciously.

"Because Hetty would not have him, at any price."

Notting was not sorry to have an opportunity of wounding Madge's vanity.

"I am sorry I did not know it," she said, "and I also should have displayed the same good taste."

"Well, I am sure you are all mighty polite," growled the interesting object of their remarks.

For all the good the money has done so far, I wish Miss Hetty Chamberlain had it," said Madge, her thin hands trembling with passion, for her temper was thoroughly aroused.

"So do I," added Notting, and for the moment he might have been sincere.

He had steeped his soul in crime, for what? All his plots and plans were likely to come to naught, and a vision of the prison cell rose before him. He saw himself in a court of justice with the dread word *Murder* staring at him, written on the walls in letters of blood.

A still more gloomy and terrible picture was that of a scaffold and a trembling wretch with pinioned arms led forth to die in the murky gloom of a chill morning.

"You know where this girl is, I suppose?" Madge's voice broke in on his painful reverie.

"No; did you not hear that my mother was alarmed because she had disappeared? She was in my house, but she quarreled with my mother and left."

"Another striking example of her good taste; I really begin to admire her," sneered Madge.

"Take care, my lady!" warned Notting, savagely; "my stock of patience is not very extensive."

"No; neither is mine."

"What do you mean to do about the lawyer's telegram?" asked Jasper, to change the subject.

"I have answered it already," she said, coolly.

"What did you say?"

"I put a price on Clanmuir."

Both father and son looked thunderstruck.

"May I venture to inquire the sum?" asked the former.

"Certainly. Two hundred thousand pounds."

"Hum! That is a good price, if you get it."

"I shall. Sir Ashley is most anxious to become the possessor of his family estate: the title is nothing without it."

"He can easily buy an estate."

"Yes, but not the one which has been in his family for goodness knows how many generations."

"Well, if you get your price I shall see about disposing of all the railway and mining stock, and then we had better make a run for it."

Madge did not reply. She wished to have an opportunity for some private conversation with Gaubard.

He, however, seemed absent and unlike himself. In truth, he was plotting against her.

When the party broke up Notting proposed a stroll.

"I have to write my lawyers; so you must stay," said Madge, imperiously, to Gaubard.

"I shall return in time to catch the mail," he answered, as he lit a cigar. "I must go to my lodgings and attend to a little private business," and without awaiting permission he walked out of the room.

Madge's eyes flashed and she bit her lip. She felt that she was very helpless in the hands of these men, who were utter scoundrels.

"If Harold turns against me what shall I do?" she muttered. She knew she was in their power and distrusted them one and all.

Gaubard walked slowly along the street, accompanied by the Nottings, who did not seem disposed to be very friendly with him.

At length he broke the ice by saying:

"Did Madge tell you she had made her will?"

"Yes; by your advice, I presume?" retorted Notting, savagely.

"I beg your pardon."

The father and son glanced at each other as if they disbelieved his word, and Gaubard went on:

"Not only that, but you should thank me for persuading her from denouncing you to the police authorities as the murderers of her father."

"Murderers of her father?" repeated Notting, contemptuously. "How does she know he is dead?"

"She firmly believes you pushed him overboard during the passage from Dover."

"She is mad!"

Gaubard started in affected surprise.

"Do you really think so?" he asked.

"Certainly; if she speaks in that way she must be mad."

"Then you had better have her put in a safe place before she does any mischief."

"What do you mean?"

Notting eyed him sharply. He did not understand this meddler in his affairs.

"I mean this: The estate once sold and the other securities realized, what is to hinder you from locking up Madge and enjoying yourself on the money?"

"What possesses you to ask that question?"

"Nothing."

"Has Madge requested you to pump me?"

"Certainly not. I only ask for information."

"Well, what would be the result if I said 'yes'?"

"I should assist you."

"How do I know I can trust you?"

"I am always unwilling to have any dealings with a woman."

"You mean you would rather join us than Madge?"

"Exactly."

"Well, I will deal with you, on one condition."

"And that is?"

"That you will tell me at once what proceedings Madge took yesterday."

"I will. Let us go into this *café*. I can talk better over a glass of wine."

Seated over their wine Gaubard basely revealed all the proceedings of the previous day.

"Now," he said, in conclusion, "I have a friend in the outskirts of the city who is the proprietor of a *maison de santé*, and for a consideration he will be delighted to add one more to his patients."

"But you must have a medical examination, and she is too sharp to betray herself."

"No examination is necessary, *here*!"

"Is the institution a private one?"

"It is."

"But how can I induce her to go there?"

"I will escort her; but must you not first have her signature to a letter accepting Sir Ashley's offer for Clanmuir?"

"I suppose so."

"Then rely on me to procure it."

"Will she trust you?"

"Yes; but next time we are together in her presence we must feign a quarrel."

"Between yourself, my son and myself?"

"Exactly."

"That can be easily done."

"Very well; and after news comes from London I'll meet you here."

"Very good."

They parted, one of the double-dealing conspirators returning to Madge at the hotel, the others resuming their way.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A VERITABLE HELL.

"Do you trust him?" asked Jasper, who had scarcely spoken during the interview.

"I cannot help doing so; I am hemmed in by dangers. We must play a bold game now."

"He seems willing to betray Madge."

"Yes; he is a villain through and through."

It was strange indeed to hear such a term from such lips.

The treacherous Frenchman made his way to the hotel and found Madge restlessly pacing the floor.

She received him coldly, but he did not appear to notice her coldness.

"If you will dictate your letters I will write them at once," he said, seating himself before a writing-table.

"Wait," she replied. "I want to know what you meant by treating me with such rudeness in the presence of those two wretches."

"I wished to follow them."

"For what purpose?"

"I heard that they had your father locked up a prisoner."

"No!"

"I heard so; of course I can't vouch for the truth of the story."

"How can you ascertain whether it is true or false?"

"I will do so after the letter is written containing your other instructions to your lawyers."

"Never mind that. Let us go out and explain what you have heard."

"Had we not better remain at home in case the detective calls or sends for us?"

"True. I am nervous and excited. I cannot bear to sit down quietly while those villains are plotting against me."

"They can do nothing for the present."

"Who told you my father was a prisoner?"

"I cannot tell the man's name. It would be a violation of my promise."

"You are mysterious."

She spoke with a sneer, and Gaubard fully understood that she doubted him.

This would not do. He must retain her confidence till after the sale of Clanmuir.

"You seem inclined to quarrel," he said, pulling his mustache and regarding her gravely.

"Oh, no; only it appeared to me that you were half-disposed to go over to the enemy this morning."

"Like all your sweet sex, my dear girl, you are too quick in jumping to conclusions."

"Perhaps so. Now you might give me a slight idea of where they are hiding away my poor father."

"In the suburbs of this city."

"Does your informant intend to give you more information shortly?"

"Yes. In a few days."

"Then I must force myself to be content. Come, let us write the letter."

The arch-traitor wished to gain time. Once the estate was sold all would be easy.

The money he would get into his own hands. Madge, with the assistance of the Nottings, must be securely locked up in a mad-house; then away to distant lands.

He was fully aware that the fraud would very soon be discovered and that there was no time to be lost.

He listened and wrote as Madge dictated, and the letter was posted immediately.

"I will take a walk as far as the detective's, if you wish," he said, "and if he has discovered nothing I will get some tickets for the theater."

"Do. Now that I know my father is alive and well I should enjoy it."

"He is safe and well. Make your mind easy."

"Very well; let us work together and keep our own counsel, and we shall outwit the Nottings."

"Of course; woman's wit and man's devotion must gain the victory."

With a smile and bow he left her.

She felt reassured.

Gaubard strolled forth, and really did interview the detective.

He also informed him that he need trouble himself no further in the case, as the lady who engaged his services had been found to be insane.

"Ah!" said the detective, "I thought as much."

"You were right. The whole affair was a delusion."

"Well, I am sorry. Of course, under such circumstances, I retain my fee."

"Certainly. I only called to prevent you from troubling yourself in the matter."

The Lucifer Gaubard, on his return to the hotel, admirably performed his rôle in the affected quarrel with the Nottings, and thereby firmly established himself in Madge's good opinion.

They attended the theater and enjoyed the performance, and afterward partook of supper at a fashionable restaurant.

"Wait until we are in Paris, Madge," said Gaubard, "then you will begin to enjoy life."

"Yes, I've always longed to go there, and I'll be rid of that wretched Jasper."

"Of course. Who could mention enjoyment in the same sentence with that incubus?"

"No one," laughed Madge. "I shall rejoice when I see that yellow face of his for the last time."

"No wonder; but now we must return to the hotel."

Next morning Madge did not rise till eleven o'clock, and her confidential secretary took advantage of that fact to go for a drive a short way in the country.

He was accompanied by Notting, senior.

"My friend, Doctor Mousset," said Gaubard, who had already made Notting aware of his conversation with Madge the day before, "is a very smart man. Once he gets hold of a patient there will never be any further trouble with him or her, so long as his fees are regularly paid."

"And in case they are not?"

"What do we care? We shall be too far away for Madge to reach us."

They laughed heartily.

"Here we are," said Gaubard, as the carriage drew up before a thick wooden gate.

The *maison de santé* was surrounded by high stone walls, and the gate was a small one inclosed by an arch of stone; no peep of the grounds around the grim building could be obtained by any passer-by.

What went on in that establishment was a mystery. A staff of stolid, sullen-looking servants attended to the wants of the doctor and his luckless patients, many of whom were perfectly sane.

The coachman rung the bell, and after a somewhat lengthy pause a small wooden shutter in the gate was cautiously opened and the harsh face of a grim-looking woman appeared.

"Ah! Matilde," exclaimed Gaubard. "Is the doctor at home?"

"Ah, Monsieur Gaubard!" replied Matilde, joyfully, if such a countenance as hers could express joy at all, "he is, indeed, and delighted he will be to behold monsieur once more."

The coachman received orders to wait, and after the barring and unlocking of the gate was duly accomplished, the visitors were admitted to a large graveled yard.

The building, which was a heavy stone structure, was well guarded by two huge bloodhounds, which were chained on either side of the stoop. They were ferocity personated, and displayed long gleaming teeth beneath their overhanging lips when they beheld the strangers.

"Quiet, Hecate! Quiet, Pluto!" cried the servant, who was a strange-looking being, clad in a long, shapeless gray robe which fell to her feet in long straight folds.

"Nice names, and equally nice animals," remarked Gaubard, who seemed thoroughly at home.

"Very," replied Notting, dryly, as the huge brutes uttered a deep, blood-curdling bay.

Matilde drew a key from her pocket and opened the massive door.

No sooner had the strangers crossed the threshold than a startling sight met their gaze.

A man, bound hand and foot, was being dragged down a flight of wide stone stairs.

He was gagged, but his wild, imploring eyes and ghastly face told a terrible tale.

"A patient who has been refractory," ex-

plained Matilde, coolly; "he is going to the discipline-room to be punished."

"Great Heaven!" exclaimed Notting, "he looks half-dead now."

The sturdy, cruel-faced keepers who were carrying him grinned as if the remark was an excellent joke.

"Oh, no; he can stand a good deal more yet," declared one, as he glanced at the emaciated wrists in the hempen fetters by which he was bearing him along.

"But, what has he done?"

"Oh! he is troublesome," returned the fellow, coolly, "and his bills haven't been paid for months."

"It is a shame!" cried Notting, for even his hard heart was touched by the look of mute appealing agony in the man's face.

"Oh, no," interposed Gaubard, "discipline must be maintained. I told you my friend knew how to manage them."

Notting did not reply, and the unfortunate man was borne away by his cruel tormentors.

They entered the doctor's study, and that individual came forward with a bland smile.

"Monsieur Gaubard, I am more than delighted to see you," he said, shaking him heartily by the hand.

"This is an English friend of mine," replied Harold, turning toward Notting; "he wishes you to take charge of a lady who is troubled with an insane delusion."

"Shall be very glad, indeed," remarked the keeper of the *Maison de Santé*.

"Yes; the lady is young and may recover, though insanity is in her family. We are in haste. What are your terms?"

"According to treatment and accommodations."

"The best, of course."

"Then my terms are two hundred pounds a year, which, of course, includes clothing."

"Very satisfactory; you can make out a receipt for a quarter in advance."

"Very good; what is the lady's name?"

"Madge Stacy."

Notting had taken no part in the bargain, for he had agreed to allow Gaubard to make all the arrangements.

"Is that safe?" he asked, when the name was mentioned.

"Perfectly. All who enter here are dead to the world."

These remarks were, of course, made in English.

The money was paid down, and the plotters left with the doctor's receipt in their possession.

"Now," said Gaubard, "as soon as the sale of Clannuir is effected we will send Madge out to the doctor's loving care, and fly. There is not a moment to be lost."

"You must escort her there."

"Certainly. I shall take her to search for her father, and once she is inside that gate—good-by to her."

The cold-blooded scoundrel laughed heartily.

"Now for gathering the money together," he resumed, "and then let them catch us if they can."

CHAPTER XXXII.

HETTY'S NEW ACQUISITION.

THE letters Hetty saw at once were all in the same handwriting. The paper was thin and the ink faded, but the contents were full of interest to the girl, who eagerly perused them.

They were written by the aunt of the man to whom they were addressed, and she signed herself Isabella Duncan.

He had incurred the displeasure of his family by an unsuitable marriage, and his mother's sister was evidently distressed by the estrangement between him and his father. In one letter she wrote:

"To think that my dear sister's only son, a descendant of two of the oldest families in Great Britain, should be a homeless outcast! It is enough to deprive me of my reason. Your mother is no more, but I feel in her place the disgrace and shame that has come upon us. No doubt your father is harsh and hard, but what have you ever done to soften his resentment? Nothing. You are the offending party; it is your place to take the first steps toward reconciliation."

All the letters went on in the same strain, and all had evidently been written to achieve the object of the writer.

Rupert Hearington had not sought forgiveness. His aunt's letters expressed sympathy for him in response to letters in which he had evidently complained bitterly of poverty. She had assisted him, and sent presents of sums of money to his wife and son. She had also sent his father's and mother's portraits. They were still with the letters in which they had been inclosed, and now, for the first time, Hetty began to understand that this packet of papers had more than accidental connection with herself.

The portrait of Sir Alywin Hearington's wife might, except for the antiquated style of the dress and the difference in the sex of the wearer, have passed for a portrait of her father.

"Is it possible that my father was Rupert Hearington?" she murmured, but the date of the

letters precluded the possibility of this solution of the mystery.

Suddenly a thought struck her. She had heard her father say that he was born in England. This Rupert Hearington had been her grandfather. The change in the name went for nothing. Hetty knew well that men who lead strange lives were often compelled by circumstances to change both name and locality.

She herself had just done so; then why should not her grandfather?

Now that this light had broken in on her the rest was comparatively easy.

She continued to read, and her father's parting words grew clear. Once more she fancied she heard them spoken:

"Never mind, Hetty, I've brought you up a lady, my beauty; you need not be afraid to take your place in the world."

At the same time he had told her that he was done with the old life, and that his fortune was assured.

He had gone away looking bright and happy, and she had never seen him again.

How had he met his death, and what hand had the Nottings in his murder?

More firmly than ever grew the impression that by the means of this family of cold, heartless wretches had her father been robbed of his life.

"A fortune!" she repeated, slowly, "a fortune! It must have been in England—and if my father is dead it ought to be mine. Ah! that is why they tried to force me to marry Jasper."

She reflected. "Now I, have it!" she cried aloud. "Jasper's wife has a fortune, and they have gone to England! It is my fortune they have taken possession of, and that's why they wanted to get hold of my father's papers!"

The whole plot was clear to her now.

"My father is murdered!" she sobbed, covering her face with both slender hands, "and these wretches are robbing me of his fortune. Thank God! I escaped from them, or I, too, would be cold in death. What shall I do to avenge my father?"

Friends she had none, except the actor and his wife and Demy. She did not for one moment question the sincerity and honesty of any of these humble adherents to her cause, but Demy had warned her that Montmorency was too talkative and unsuspicious to be fully trusted, and Demy himself could scarcely be thought of as an adviser in such a case.

To whom could she apply for counsel and assistance?

Mrs. Mendal!

The very person of all others, Hetty decided! She gathered up the letters and portraits and made up her mind that on the following day she should visit that lady and tell her the whole story.

She knew Mrs. Mendal was shrewd. She also knew she was rich, and it would be impossible to punish the Nottings or to claim her rights without legal assistance, and legal assistance cost money.

When Hetty had made up her mind to this course she felt happier.

Her grief for her father was not lessened, but the thought that his murderers should not go unpunished was somewhat consoling.

On the back of the portrait on which Demy had traced the resemblance to herself Hetty observed the name written in an old-fashioned hand, quite different from the writing in the letters.

The name was "Henriette Le Frage."

This bright-faced woman was no doubt her grandmother, and she had derived her name from her as well as her beauty.

In spite of his kindness to her Hetty deemed it wisest to keep her discovery from Demy.

She dreaded some rash though well-intentioned action on his part which might prove disastrous to her plans.

How little did she dream that the very man whom Mrs. Montmorency had turned away from the door was none other than the detective who was trying night and day to find her!

She was silent and preoccupied during supper, and retired early to rest.

Next morning she dressed herself immediately after breakfast, and declining the offer Mr. Montmorency made to accompany her, started off with the packet of letters in her sachel.

She found Mrs. Mendal at home. She appeared surprised to see Hetty, and the latter deemed it best to state her errand at once.

Mrs. Mendal listened to her with the greatest attention.

"You are Hetty Chamberlain?" she said, at length, for the girl had not mentioned her real name.

"Yes; at least that is the name I have always supposed to be mine."

"And you are the girl I have been in search of?"

Hetty's astonishment was plainly pictured in her face.

"I have been in search of you for some time. Do you know the Nottings?"

"Yes; I believe they murdered my father."

"I am certain of it, and expect to have the proofs of the deed before this week is out!"

"Now, Mrs. Mendal, I want your advice."

"You shall have it; but you must tell me your whole history, as well as that of these letters."

Hetty obeyed without hesitation.

"Now let me tell you something," said the fence, looking the girl full in the face. "First I must ask you a question, though."

"Yes, Mrs. Mendal."

"Have you any recollection of your mother?"

"No; she must have died when I was very young."

"She did; and I suppose you will be surprised to hear that she was my niece."

"Indeed? How thankful I am to find a relative! I have felt so alone in the world."

Mrs. Mendal looked grave. She thought that Hetty would probably, at some future time, regard her in a less favorable light.

"I shall do my utmost to avenge your father's death and place you in the position you ought to occupy," she said gravely, "but, after that, I cannot promise to interest myself in you much. I have lived alone for many years, and solitude is dear to me for many reasons."

Hetty felt deeply disappointed, but she said nothing. She was not devoid of tact, and she felt that this woman did not wish to be questioned.

"That shall be as you wish, aunt—you will allow me to call you so, will you not?"

"Yes, if you like, though the word sounds strange to me. Now, in the first place, you must change your place of residence."

"Yes, it might be better. The Montmorencys are—"

"Fools."

"Well, not that, exactly, but they are not particularly wise."

"Just so. This boy, Demy, too; hadn't you better get rid of him?"

"Oh! poor Demy has been so kind, and is so devoted to me! I do not wish him to think me ungrateful."

"Yes; but neither do you want to endanger your chance of success."

"Very true. What shall I do?"

Mrs. Mendal reflected. Demy had displayed considerable shrewdness, and was also an important witness. He must not be lost sight of.

How hard it was for her that her position forbade the idea of calling in the services of a skilled detective.

How little did she guess the true state of the case—that Sam Saunders, the keenest man in the United States Secret Service, had been piping the case for months!

"I'll tell you what to do," she said at length. "Write a note to Demy and tell him you want him to watch old Mrs. Notting."

"Yes; I can do that."

"Say you don't want him to call just now, for he might be followed."

"I will."

"And add that you have found a relative of your mother's with whom you are living. That he is a witness, and that he must not move, as you may need him."

"Is not that a somewhat odd way of stating the case?"

"I do not think so."

"I fancy it sounds as if I were claiming Demy's services as a right."

"Never mind. He will like it."

"Perhaps so."

So the note was written, and another to the Montmorencys in which Hetty stated that she had met an old friend and would not return for some days.

"I shall send out and buy you everything you need," said her aunt, "for I don't want them to know where you are."

So Hetty found herself settled in a new home, and her aunt was kind—in an abrupt, strong-minded fashion.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A MOMENTOUS INTERVIEW.

THAT night, hours after the girl was asleep, a visitor arrived.

Mrs. Mendal received him in her back parlor.

"Well, mum," said Rusty, for he was the late visitor, "I'm glad to tell you that we are gittin' on."

"What have you done to-day?"

"I've seen the cat-boat and identified her."

"You have?"

"Yes, mum; and here's the pictur' of the man who was found in her."

He handed the photograph, which Sam Saunders had lent him for the occasion, to Mrs. Mendal.

She gazed at it long and earnestly.

"Yes," she said, slowly, "that is poor Chamberlain, beyond a shadow of a doubt."

"That's what I say."

"What does your friend say?"

"Who? Burchall?"

This was the name Sam had adopted.

"He says—of course he never seen Chamberlain, but he is willin' to take my word that's him."

"Well, Rusty, I've got news for you."

Rusty looked up sharply.

"What kind of news?"

"I've found Chamberlain's daughter."
"By the great horn spoon, no!"
"Yes; found her."
"Where is she?"
"No matter; I know. Now, Rusty, go and bring your friend here."
"If I can find him; you know I didn't dare to go and see that boat till he promised to take Sam Saunders off my hands."
"Find him and return here."
"To-night?"
"Yes, if possible."
"All right. You won't get tired waiting for me?"
"No; I'll wait."

She sat down, waiting patiently, though midnight had struck long ago. Her chin was clasped in her hand and her elbow rested on the table, while she seemed lost in thought. Perhaps she was reviewing her past life, with all its sins and weaknesses.

At two o'clock a soft ring at the bell told her of the arrival of her expected guests.

She attended the door herself, for the servant was sleeping soundly in her room long ago.

Rusty entered, accompanied as usual by Spot, and by his side was the man Mrs. Mendal had requested to see.

"Good-evening, madam!" he said, courteously.

"Rusty has told you I am interested in this affair, I presume?" she said, without noticing his greeting.

"He has."

"Then I will consult with you still further. It is dry work talking, though. Rusty do you think you could find a saloon open?"

"Yes, mum," said Rusty, with alacrity.

"Then go and get some brandy. Here is my latch-key."

As soon as Rusty was out of hearing Mrs. Mendal turned to the detective and said:

"Speak the truth. Are you not Sam Saunders?"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

TREATED TO HIS OWN DOSE.

THE sale of Clanmuir was soon accomplished, and the purchase-money in Madge's possession.

The three conspirators were now ready for the next move. Madge must be got rid of without loss of time.

To Gaubard this piece of villainy was intrusted. He had led up to it with consummate skill. He was to escort her to the establishment of Doctor Mouset, in order that she might secure the release of her father whom he pretended to discover was a prisoner there.

Then, when she was safely in the hands of the doctor, Gaubard would make some excuse for absenting himself for a few moments from the room, and the deed was done.

First, though, he must obtain possession of the money.

He artfully led up to this by inquiring whether Madge had a safe place to keep it.

"Oh! yes," she replied, "there is no danger at all."

"Remember, Jasper is well trained in the art of stealing."

"That is true," said Madge, somewhat uneasily; "but he cannot get my money."

"He might drug you and rob you while you slept."

"What shall I do then?"

"Place it in a bank."

"Yes, but suppose we leave at a moment's notice?"

"True."

Madge pondered. "As soon as I see my father I'll be all right," she said. "I'll give it to him."

She had decided that it would be best to avoid, for the present, an open rupture with the Nottings, unless Stacy could prove that they had kidnapped him.

Gaubard's story was that he had been decoyed into a carriage and carried away to the insane asylum from the pier during the confusion while the passengers were landing.

"You see," he explained to Madge, "it would be hard to prove that the Nottings had any hand in the business."

"But no one else had any motive for getting him out of the way."

"No, but they can easily say that he was mistaken for another man. Nothing could be easier than that."

Madge was half-convinced, and felt it would be dangerous to defy Notting or his son. Might they not escape and put detectives on her track out of revenge?

She therefore placed the heavy roll of bills in a hand-sachel which she intended to give to her father.

There was no reason for delay, and as soon as the carriage which Gaubard ordered came to the door, they took their places in it and set off for Dr. Mouset's institution.

No scruples troubled the Frenchman; he felt at ease and gay. In all his life he had never had anything like the sum of money he would now possess.

Madge had been thoroughly deceived, and to keep up the deception Gaubard pretended to ad-

vise her how to act toward the Nottings on her return, accompanied by her father.

At length they drew up at the gate, which was opened as before by the ill-favored woman.

Madge was surprised when this old hag greeted Gaubard so familiarly, but had no time to ask an explanation.

She passed the two huge dogs with a shudder and found herself in the doctor's parlor.

"Sit down, Madge," said Gaubard, and he turned to leave the room.

"Where are you going?" she asked, nervously.

"To show the man in charge the order I got from the detective to give your father his liberty."

She still retained her hold on the sachel and Gaubard was afraid to ask for it.

It mattered not now whether her suspicions were aroused or not, but still he preferred to keep out of her sight after she once knew he had betrayed her.

Dr. Mouset was waiting for him.

"Well," he said, with an affable smile, "you have brought me my fair patient?"

"Yes, and now, doctor, I must let you arrange all the rest; but first of all, let me ask you to hand me the small sachel the lady carries."

"A sachel?"

"Yes; to pacify her and keep her quiet I allowed her to carry some English securities of mine, and I must have them, of course, before leaving the house."

"Certainly. I shall see the lady and no doubt arrange that."

There was a cunning gleam in his eye which alarmed Gaubard for the safety of the money.

What if this doctor got hold of the money and refused to give it up?

Then he would certainly be in a terrible plight.

In that establishment, too, Mouset's word was law, and Gaubard well knew he could find no redress should the doctor prove a traitor.

"Perhaps I had better ask her for it, and in case she refuses to give it up, I can take it by force," he said, anxiously.

"Nay, I cannot allow you to resort to violence."

There was no question about it, the doctor was disposed to act very differently from what Gaubard had expected.

"What do you mean?" asked the latter, boldly.

He felt that he might as well know the worst.

"Just this: When you engaged my services for this lady you did not state that she was to be robbed as well as imprisoned."

"Ha! So now you show your colors?" cried the baffled villain, springing to his feet.

"Just so. I am a man who always keeps an eye on the main chance. If the lady holds the purse, why not make terms with the lady?"

"You will not dare?"

"Go easy; I dare anything! As you told your friend, 'all who enter here are dead to the world.'"

He was so perfectly self-possessed and cool that Gaubard ground his teeth in helpless fury.

"My friend knows where I am," he hissed, "and he will bring the police to your vile den."

"Steady! Don't call names. If I am not mistaken, you have as much reason to dread the police as I have."

Gaubard felt the truth of this assertion. He had put himself completely in this man's power, and he knew it.

"How much do you want for this job?" he growled, harshly.

"I must see the lady first. It may pay me to treat with her," retorted the doctor, airily.

"If you do, you will do it at your peril. She thinks her father is a prisoner in your hands, and as soon as you release her will return with a posse of police at her back."

"Nonsense! I can easily convince her that you deceived her. Besides, it is as easy for me to take two new patients in charge as one."

He smiled as he spoke, and Gaubard could hardly repress a shudder.

Without awaiting a reply, the doctor left him abruptly.

He closed the door behind him with a sharp snap, and Gaubard sprang forward and tried to open it. To his unbounded horror he found himself a prisoner.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A WOMAN'S WILE.

CURSES, loud and deep, rushed from his lips, but availed him nothing.

Madge, meanwhile, was impatiently awaiting Gaubard's return. She sat with her precious sachel firmly clasped in her hands, and looked up sharply when the doctor entered.

Now this man really did possess skill in the treatment of mental diseases. His eye was keen as that of a hawk, and one look at his patients told him whether they were the victims of brain disorder or not.

He saw that Madge was perfectly sane at the first glance.

"Ah! good-day, madame," he said in excellent English.

Gaubard, with all his sharpness, had never suspected that the doctor spoke English.

"Good-day; where is Mr. Gaubard?"

"In another room for the present. I wish to have a little conversation with you."

"I am in a hurry. Are you the man who has charge of my father?"

"No, madame. Your father has been deceived; your father is not here, nor do I know anything of him."

"Then why did Mr. Gaubard bring me here?"

She started to her feet as if about to leave the room.

"One moment, I beg," said the doctor; "when I said you had been deceived, I should have added, I have been, also."

"What does all this mean?" asked Madge, looking around in bewilderment.

"If you'll grant me your attention for a few minutes, I'll explain. Some days ago Mr. Gaubard, who is an old acquaintance of mine, called here in company with another gentleman whom he referred to as an English friend, but whom I heard him address as Notting."

"Great heavens!"

All her fears came rushing back with tenfold strength.

"As Notting," the doctor went on, calmly; "and they requested me to take charge of an insane lady."

Madge tried to speak, but could not force one word past her white lips.

"From the conversation that went on," said the doctor, "I judged there was a conspiracy afoot, and did not permit my visitors to know that I understood English."

"What did you hear?"

"Enough to convince me that my suspicions were well founded. See this entry in my day-book."

She looked and read:

"Received from Harold Gaubard £50, being fee for three months' board and medical attendance of Madge Stacy, insane patient, who is not expected to recover her reason."

The date was at the top of the page, and Madge's sight grew dim as she read the convincing proof of Gaubard's devilish treachery.

"Now, madame, it remains for you to say what my next step shall be," said the doctor, in conclusion.

"Let me have one moment to recover myself," she replied, but almost immediately went on; "this Gaubard pretended to be my friend. I have just crossed from Dover, and since my arrival here my father disappeared, or he may have fallen overboard from the steamer, for he was very ill. In my anxiety on his account I consulted this Gaubard, and he told me he had been kidnapped and was here a prisoner. I have just received a large sum of money and brought it with me to place in my father's hands."

"Who is Notting?" inquired the doctor, who wished to understand the case in all its bearings.

"Was he an old man or a young one?"

"Middle-aged."

"He is my husband's father."

"Who has the claim on your fortune if you were out of the way?"

"Harold Gaubard. He induced me to make a will constituting him my heir."

"I see. I have had experience of him and know him well. Has he any means?"

"No; out of pity, having known him in New York, I employed him as secretary, and his first act was to instill doubts into my mind against my husband and his father, while all the time he was plotting against me."

"Exactly. Now what course do you intend to follow?"

Madge read the doctor like an open book.

He had become her defender because he knew Gaubard was poor and had been shrewd enough to surmise that she was rich!

"My first act will be to reward you for your noble conduct," she said, holding out her hand, which the doctor pressed fervently.

"Thank you. May I ask how this man succeeded in convincing your father-in-law that you were insane?"

"How can I tell? Besides, to tell the truth, I have very little confidence in Notting."

"Is he rich?"

"No, he is as poor as Gaubard, or was till I married his son."

Madge was playing her game skillfully. She was playing for high stakes—nothing less than life and liberty.

"You are right to have no confidence in him; he plotted with Gaubard to have you shut up here."

"And agreed to pay two hundred pounds a year for my board and medical attendance?"

"Yes."

"Well, as Mr. Gaubard is quite evidently more insane than I am, I shall place him in your charge, doctor, and as I am richer than he is, I shall pay one thousand pounds a year for him. Make out a receipt and I'll pay a year in advance now."

A thousand pounds!

How rich this woman must be, and those miserly scamps were going to get her off their hands for a beggarly fifty pounds. He wished it was possible to keep both her and her money,

but that would be too dangerous. Notting was doubtless waiting for Gaubard, and it would not do to give him an opportunity of bringing the police, who already regarded him with no favorable eye, down on his *maison de sante*.

"You are generous, dear madame. I will write the receipt at once."

"And," added Madge, with her usual cunning, "when you have escorted me to my carriage—for I am nervous and don't quite fancy those pets of yours at the door—I shall hand you a check for a similar sum to be expended as you see fit in the interests of your poor patients."

"Thanks, madam; I cannot express my gratitude. As you have so readily guessed, my institution is partly devoted to charity. For charity's sweet sake I will accept your noble gift."

Madge was impatient to be gone and her host had no motive for detaining her. She kept her promise on entering the carriage, but did not give him a check.

"Here is the sum I mentioned," she said, "for I leave the city immediately and have no bank account. Keep my faithful secretary closely confined if you wish to please me."

The doctor bowed the lady off and returned to the room where Gaubard was awaiting him in no pleasant frame of mind.

"Well," he said, indignantly, as the doctor entered, "you have taken your time, I hope. Where is the lady? I think on the whole I shall take her with me and go."

"Impossible, my friend."

"What do you mean by your confounded smiles and smirks?"

"You can't accompany the lady, for she is already gone."

"You let her go?"

"Certainly. I would not be so foolish as to detain her."

Gaubard would have enjoyed knocking him down, but dared not.

"I suppose you may think this an honest way of acting," he blustered, "after I have been the means of bringing you so many patients?"

"All of whom were poor pay."

"You were glad enough to get them at the time."

"Yes; but my ideas have expanded."

Gaubard answered with an oath and the doctor turned on him with fury in his face.

"Take care!" he shouted; "you know that I can tame stronger men than you. Keep a quiet tongue in your head for you are one of my patients *yourself*."

The other sunk back in his seat, white and trembling.

"You would never dare," he said, with ashy lips.

"I would dare anything in this house," replied the doctor, coolly, "especially for so generous a lady as the one so kindly introduced by the excellent Monsieur Gaubard."

"Do you mean to say that woman has paid you to lock me up here?" stammered the baffled schemer.

"I mean you are trapped, my friend," said the medical man, with a smile which showed his white teeth unpleasantly. "You dug a pit and fell in it."

Directly Madge was clear of the house she resolved on a new course of action. She decided to make her escape from the Nottings at once. Her eyes were fully opened to their true characters, and she felt quite certain that her first fears on her father's account had been well grounded. They had murdered him and sought to rid themselves of her by an infamous scheme.

"I shall try to get my dresses and jewels," she said, and ordered the coachman to drive to the hotel.

Jasper and his father stood on the steps awaiting the return of Gaubard, when, to their unbounded surprise, Madge alighted.

She gave them a look which convinced them their plots were thwarted, and they saw also that she was fully aware of the part they had enacted.

"By George!" exclaimed Jasper, as Madge swept by without a word, "how has she escaped? Where is Gaubard?"

"Don't you go near her," said Notting, "she looks dangerous. She is just in a mood to fly out and denounce us. Come away; let us try and find Gaubard. Maybe he has played us fake."

Their search for Gaubard was unavailing, and they were completely baffled and knew not what to think.

At length they returned to the hotel, determined to face Madge at all hazards and learn the truth.

She had packed all her belongings during their absence and was gone, they knew not where.

The father and son looked at each other in dismay.

"We had better get out of here quicker than lightning," said Jasper.

"Yes; I have considerable money, and we may as well be contented with what we've got, for Gaubard has sold us and they are off."

"I wish I never had seen or heard of Cham-

berlain or his fortune," grumbled Jasper. "We have made nothing worth the name out of the whole business, and it's my belief, if the detectives are on our track, that we'll be hunted around the world and hanged at last."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

SAM UNMASKS.

In the interest of his profession Sam Saunders would not have hesitated to deny his name, but something in Mrs. Mendal's face told him that on this occasion it was not necessary to do so.

"Yes, Mrs. Mendal," he said, calmly, "I am Sam Saunders, very much at your service."

"I knew it, and I am glad you have been frank with me, for it simplifies matters. Now let me be equally candid. In the first place, I heard you were no longer in the service."

"Nor am I. This case I have undertaken privately. I felt an interest in it, and am employed by an Englishman who has nothing to do with any bureau of detectives."

"Then you are working as a private individual on this case *only*?"

"You have stated my position exactly."

"And I am safe to deal with you without incurring any risks?"

"Entirely so. I have never meddled with outside matters, as you know. Now, may I ask why you sent Rusty for me?"

"I have found Chamberlain's daughter."

"No!"

"Yes; she is asleep in this house."

"Does she know?"

"She does. By a strange chance she obtained possession of a number of letters written by her grandfather's aunt."

"That is fortunate. I must wire Doctor Howard at once."

"Your employer?"

"Yes, and this girl's cousin. Now, the girl—have I seen her? Is she the one who was here with Montmorency, the actor?"

"She is; how did you know?"

"She resembles her cousin."

"Indeed! and did not the dead man also, for Hetty looks like her father?"

"Yes; it was the likeness between them that gave me the first clew. Doctor Howard was on board the North Star when the cat-boat was picked up."

"You do not say so?"

"Yes; but I hear Rusty. Do you wish him to know who I am?"

"No, not for the present."

Rusty came in and sat down. Mrs. Mendal set forth glasses and ice-water, and the old crook began to feel at home.

"Now, Rusty," said the woman, "I want you to keep your head clear, for to-morrow you must go to Seabright and dig up the papers Chamberlain placed in your hands."

"Is that so?"

"Yes, as I told you, I have found his daughter."

Rusty was delighted, and still more so when Mrs. Mendal informed him that he should accompany her to England in order that he might act as a witness.

Rusty looked down at his garments, which lent a significance to his cognomen, and remarked:

"I guess, mum, you'll have to fit me out with some new togs, or I won't catch on much to society."

"Yes, Rusty, you shall be well dressed, and you had better leave Spot behind."

The dog looked up when he heard his name, and wagged his stump of a tail at his master.

"Pore old Spot!" said Rusty, with a sigh. "It would be kin' of mean to go back on him."

"We can find a good home for him," said Mrs. Mendal, "and you know, considering the business we are going on, the more respectable we look the better."

"I s'pose so," said Rusty, ruefully. He did not like the idea of parting with his four-footed friend, neither did he enjoy the prospect of too rigid respectability.

"Can't a cove have nothin' to drink nor nothin' when he gits there?" he asked, anxiously.

"Oh, yes, you can drink as much as you like when you are off duty," replied Sam Saunders, smilingly.

"I wouldn't like to git too respectable all to once," said Rusty, "cos, you see, Mr. Burchall, I ain't useter it."

"I shall be glad to meet the young lady in the morning, Mrs. Mendal, and I'll lose no time in wiring to Doctor Howard."

"Say!" cried Rusty, in alarm, "who is Doctor Howard?"

"Only a gentleman who is interested in the case."

"I wish there wasn't quite so many interested. S'posin' it ends in some of us gittin' juggled?"

"Oh! no danger of that," said Sam, while Mrs. Mendal and he exchanged glances of amusement at the thought of Rusty's consternation had he been aware in whose company he was about to cross the ocean.

"It is too late to talk any longer," Mrs. Mendal said. "Now, Rusty, I shall expect

you here to-morrow night with all the documents."

"I'll be here; and you, Burchall?"

"Without fail; by that time I'll have an answer from the doctor."

Rusty still looked suspicious, so Mrs. Mendal said:

"It's all right, Rusty. I know who he means."

Knowing Mrs. Mendal was too smart to allow herself to be drawn into a trap, the crook was reassured.

Burchall and Rusty left the house together, but soon parted—the detective hastening to send his dispatch, the crook to spend the hours that remained of darkness in sleep in some one of his shady retreats.

Sam Saunders's dispatch to Frank Howard was worded this way:

"FRANK HOWARD,
MARSHALL HOUSE,
SAVANNAH, GA."

"Evidence all in. Come to New York immediately. Heir-at-law and documents await you."

"SAM SAUNDERS."

Next morning the detective called on Mrs. Mendal. He found that lady at luncheon with her niece. She introduced Hetty as "Miss Hearington."

Sam took a seat near the girl who had occupied so large a place in his thoughts, and wondered how he could best inform her of the strange chain of circumstances which led to their meeting. He thought she looked pale, nervous and dispirited.

He was correct in his surmise, as usual, for her aunt, as she termed Mrs. Mendal, had told her all.

Her father's death was now an absolute certainty; not only did she know that, but also the terrible history of his murder.

She showed the detective all the letters, and portrait, and he easily traced the strong resemblance between the faces which had now become familiar to him.

"Henriette Le Frange," said he; "that must be your grandmother, who was married to your grandfather in St. Paul's church, Covent Garden, London."

"I suppose so."

"Yes; and these letters are from Isabella Duncan, who was Doctor Howard's aunt."

"Doctor Howard must be very old, then—as old as my grandfather."

"No, he is quite a young man; his mother was the youngest of a large family and Lady Hearington the eldest."

"Yes; and of course my grandfather married young and so did my father."

"Your grandfather was not an old man when he died," said Mrs. Mendal; "I saw him at his son's wedding, and he looked like an elder brother, and your father was not twenty-one when he married."

"Did Notting, during your stay in his house, make any admissions which will tell against him?" asked Sam.

"Yes," replied Hetty; "he told me, when he was trying to conciliate me, that my father was, in England, a wealthy man."

"That was why Jasper wished to marry you," said Mrs. Mendal; "if you had consented it would have prevented them from carrying out this fraud—saved them the trouble of finding a false heiress."

"Yes; is it not a mercy that I hated that wretch of a Jasper so? I might have been forced into marrying my poor dear father's murderer," said Hetty, with a shudder.

"Well, now," spoke up Mrs. Mendal, who did not wish Hetty to dwell too long on the sad subject of her father's death, "I must take you out shopping. By the way, I had a note from the man I took you to see telling me he thought you would succeed on the stage."

"He is too late," said Hetty, with a smile on her lips, though she was still deathly pale and her eyes full of tears.

"Yes; he little knows that it is the heiress of an old Scottish noble family he is discussing so coolly."

Sam bade the ladies good-day, and they set out on a shopping expedition.

Mrs. Mendal was lavish in her generosity, and Hetty's outfit was fine enough for a princess.

Her dresses were, of course, deep mourning, heavily ornamented with crape, which set off her blonde hair to perfection, while her fair skin seemed dazzling in its purity and her eyes glowed like black diamonds.

"You are a very handsome girl, Hetty," declared Mrs. Mendal, looking at her approvingly; "you will, no doubt, be marrying some high nobleman."

"I hate the thought of marriage," replied Hetty, with a blush, for she had not forgotten the glances of admiration which had fallen from the eyes of Sam Saunders.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

DEMY IS IN CLOVER.

To tell the truth, Hetty had made a deep impression on Sam, though he was not susceptible. So far he had gone through the world heart whole; but now he found himself thinking of

large black eyes with long silky fringes and soft masses of yellow hair, a slim, childish form and red, smiling lips."

"Pshaw!" he said, impatiently, "I must be 'way off."

And a blush came over his sunburnt cheek.

Hetty had, of course, told him of Demy, and expressed a wish that her first friend should be informed that she had not forgotten him.

"I'll go and see that boy," said he, to himself; "I have nothing to do till Rusty turns up to-night."

He arrived at Demy's domicile, but it was some time before he found the boy.

Mrs. Murphy was not at home, and Demy had been indulging in a nap.

He looked surprised when Sam Saunders knocked, but invited him in.

"I guess you're a new customer," said Demy, stretching himself with a yawn. "Wot time do you want to be called?"

"I am not in search of a waker-up," returned the detective. "I came from Miss Hastings, who expressed a wish that I should call on you."

"I wish she'd tell me where she is," Demy said, staring hard in his visitor's face. "She ain't used to pickin' up all sorts, an' I am on-easy about her."

"She is with her aunt," replied Sam, feeling certain that the boy felt a sort of guardianship over Hetty, and was jealous of Sam's interference.

"That's all mighty fine," grumbled the boy, "but she didn't know she had a aunt las' time I spoke to her, an' it's mighty queer fur her to turn up so suddint."

"You are right to be cautious, Demy," said Sam, who could not help feeling amused, "but you remember the letters you gave Miss Hastings?"

"Yes," assented Demy, doubtfully.

"You were the means of her finding her aunt through them."

"That may be all right, but who are you, an' wot have you got to do with her?"

"I am a detective who has been in search of the young lady. I am employed by her father's relatives, who came from England to try and find him."

"And you ain't got nothin' to do with them Nottings?"

"Certainly not. I shall bring them to justice if I can."

"An' you're square? Cross yourself, an' wish you may die in your tracks."

"Yes, I am square, cross myself, and wish I may die in my tracks."

"All right; so you're a detective? Wish I was one."

"You may be. Miss Hastings, whose proper name is Hearington, wishes to be your friend when she is rich, which I hope she soon will be. You must then attend school for some years, and if you wish to become a member of the Secret Service, I do not see why you should not."

"Well, I'll tell you:—I wouldn't like to take money from her, 'cause it would seem like I only helped her for the sake of de boodle."

"Oh! Miss Hearington knows better than to think such a thing."

"I hope so, 'cause when I seen her I didn't think she'd ever have a cent."

"No; and you would hurt her feelings if you do not allow her to help you, just as she would hurt yours if she refused to let you help her—see?"

"I would be awful throwed down if she did, that's so."

"Well, before we go away from New York, Doctor Howard will make some good arrangement which will advance your interests in life, Demy."

"Who is he?"

"Miss Hearington's cousin, and the man who employed me."

"Well," added Demy, with a sigh, "I hope he is a good feller, for I s'pose he'll be marrying her."

"Nonsense!" replied Sam, quickly. "He is as old, if not older, than her father."

"Is that so? Well, I'll do whatever she says, if she lets me go to see her 'fore she goes away."

"I can promise that she will."

"Well, all right then. Give her my regards, an' tell her I want to see her for sure."

Demy seemed to consider that the interview had lasted long enough, and Sam withdrew.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE EVIDENCE-PAPERS.

ON returning to his room he found a dispatch from Doctor Howard awaiting him. It was longer than the one that called it forth.

"FROM DOCTOR HOWARD,

"SAVANNAH, GA.,

"TO SAM SAUNDERS.

"No.—16th STREET,

"NEW YORK CITY.

"Accept my congratulations; leave to-night. Engage passage for me, yourself Miss H., all necessary witnesses in first steamer for England. When you have made all arrangements, draw on bankers."

"That is satisfactory," said Sam Saunders, putting the dispatch in his pocket.

"After supper I'll call on Mrs. Mendal and report progress. I am anxious to see what Rusty has accomplished."

When Sam arrived at Mrs. Mendal's he learned that Rusty had not yet made his appearance. Hetty wore one of the new mourning-dresses, and the detective thought he had never seen a fairer face than hers, framed in its halo of golden hair. The great black eyes contrasted so strikingly with the milky skin and delicate carnation flush on cheek and lip, and the slim form and tiny hands and feet gave Hetty a childish grace that was irresistible.

Mrs. Mendal felt proud of her, and deeply regretted that her own previous life must forever prevent her from becoming a proper guardian for the fair young girl in whom she felt so warm an interest.

"I must not grow too fond of her," she said to the detective, when Hetty left the room for a moment, "for I know I am no fit companion for her. As soon as she is safely established in her new home we shall part forever."

"Do you intend to return here?"

"No; I shall sell everything I possess—in fact, I have already done so. I shall end my life in Germany."

While they talked, a ring at the door announced the arrival of Rusty.

He came in carrying the much talked of box, which he had guarded with watchdog-like fidelity.

"Here you are," he said, setting it down with a thump; "and, say, Mrs. Mendal, you'll excuse me if I mention that I'm awful thirsty."

Rusty's favorite beverage was forthcoming, and Sam Saunders proceeded to examine the box. It was a large-sized, japanned money-box, securely locked.

"Of course Chamberlain did not give you the key?" questioned the detective.

"No; some ways he was a kind of crank."

"It is strange that he carried about copies of these important papers."

"He said the reason of that was that while his father lived he always kep' the box hisself, an' gave him copies of the 'documents'—he always called 'em documents."

"Yes."

"An' after the old man croaked, I mean died, he took the box. He said he knew he'd come into a fortune some time, an' he kep' the papers handy to show any lawyer in case they was asked for; but the real documents he kep' dark, 'cause he thought maybe he might meet some shyster lawyer who might try to git hold of them. 'I kin show these,' he says to me, 'an' if they s'pute them I got the real ones back of me.' So there they is, the true blue, A 1, copper-fastened ones."

Sam hesitated before opening the box, but only for a moment. He represented Doctor Howard, who was acting for the estate of the dead man's grandfather, and he knew he was acting in accordance with his wishes, so he drew a bunch of keys from his pocket and unlocked the box.

The papers were neatly arranged. First came two letters from a lawyer in London, who seemed to act as a mediator between the old baronet and his son. Next the marriage-certificate of Rupert Hearington and Henriette Le Frage, who were married in St. Paul's Church, Covent Garden, on the — day of November, 18—, by the Rev. Reginald Gilbert.

The next two papers were copies of the register of the birth of a son, Rupert Hearington, and his baptism register. The other papers were American. It was evident the family had crossed the ocean and some years had elapsed. Then the son, Rupert, had married. His marriage with Antoinette Riviere was duly certified, his father being one of the witnesses and Mrs. Olga Mendal another. Then came the baptismal register of Henriette Le Frage, the lawful daughter of Rupert Hearington and his wife, Olga.

"Well," said Sam Saunders, when he had examined them all, "I am more than delighted to see how methodical your father was in his care of these papers, which are more than worth their weight in gold."

"Poor, papa," said Hetty, weeping bitterly; "to think that he should lose his life just when it began to be worth living."

Mrs. Mendal pressed her hand in silent sympathy, but the detective said nothing. He could not forget the crafty face of the dead man in the cat-boat, and knowing what a life he had spent, felt that it was a just recompense for his crimes that he should die by the hand of one of his wicked companions!

"Now," he said aloud, after a pause, during which Hetty wiped away her tears, "all we have to do is to await the arrival of Doctor Howard. I shall engage passages for all of us in the next Cunard boat. Then, heigh! for merry England!"

All the faces brightened at the words, save Rusty's alone.

"I s'pose I got to go," he grumbled, "an' throw off on poor Spot; but, one sure case, I can't go till I git some new togs."

"To-morrow, Rusty," said Mrs. Mendal,

"you shall meet me in a gentlemen's clothing-store, and I'll undertake to fit you out for your voyage."

"Thank you, mum; that's spoke like yourself."

Sam had little conversation with Hetty beyond delivering Demy's message, but he took himself severely to task as he wended his way home.

"Sam Saunders," he said, "you are getting plaguey near making a fool of yourself. Dry up, now, and don't end your days by writing yourself an ass."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE VILLAINS SCATTER!

RESISTANCE was useless, and Gaubard knew it.

He determined to make terms with Doctor Mousset, if possible, and he had a certain amount of influence with that respectable scamp, for he was an old acquaintance through Matilde, who was his aunt.

"Now, Doc," he said, speaking pleasantly, "you have been too smart for me, and I acknowledge it."

"I don't see how you can very well do otherwise."

"Well, I ain't going to try. Now I do not mind giving away the whole snap; if you like to go in with me, we can make more money than you got from Madge."

The doctor looked skeptical, and Gaubard realized that he would experience some difficulty in convincing him of the truth of his story, but determined to try.

When he had related it all, he paused, and looked the proprietor of the mad-house full in the face.

His heart sunk. The doctor did not believe one word.

"See here, Mousset," said he, desperately, "will you let me send a telegram to the lawyers I told you of? I will pay for it, and you can receive the answer. By this time, no doubt, the detective has wired them from New York. I am in your hands, and can't help myself. If you use me well and stand in with me, we will make money; if you don't, I am dumb as a fish, and not a cent will you get beyond what you have got."

This sounded well, and Mousset began to ponder.

Gaubard seemed in earnest, and it could do no harm to permit him to wire the lawyers in London, whose high standing forbade the thought that they could be accomplices of the Frenchman.

The doctor was a man who would do anything for money, and he was more anxious than he wished any one to guess to retire from his present business, for such ugly whispers had got abroad about the establishment of which he was the head that he lived in daily anticipation of an official visit from the police.

"See here, Gaubard," he replied, "I am willing to believe you if possible, but your story is so utterly at variance with the lady's that I don't know what to think."

"Do you suppose I would tell a falsehood that could so readily be detected?"

"No. I'll let you send the dispatch; but how are we to profit by exposing these conspirators?"

"Did I not tell you that I know the detective? I met him in New York, and I was the first one who put him on the track."

"Yes; but you afterward stood in with the swindlers."

"And I told him I would do so. All I wanted was to secure some of the boodle, and that's all I want now, and all you want also."

The doctor felt the truth of this, and as soon as Gaubard had written the message he wished to send, dispatched a servant with it to the nearest station.

It ran thus:

"MESSRS. SHEFFIELD AND GRUBE,

"OLD JURY,

"LONDON.

"Mrs. James Elkington is one of a gang of New York swindlers. Her husband's real name is Notting and the name of her father is Stacy. The gang have quarrelled and the woman is alone. She is in possession of the price of Clamuir and no time should be lost in arresting her. Her personal appearance is known to you. She speaks no French. Answer."

"Now await an answer," said Gaubard, "and, unless I miss my guess, you'll find that they have received a warning from the other side."

The dispatch was on its way, and the doctor thought it best to treat Gaubard well till he received the reply, so he gave him the freedom of the house.

He watched him carefully, however, for he felt no confidence in him.

Gaubard's aunt seemed surprised at her nephew's mysterious behavior. First he had called in company with another man, then came accompanied by a lady, and now he remained alone.

The old woman knew not what to think, but Doctor Mousset took care that she had no opportunity of asking an explanation.

Late in the evening came the reply from the London lawyers:

"Have just received intimation of swindle from New York. Wire particulars at our expense. Reward offered for apprehension of Notting, who is a murderer."

"There," said Gaubard, "did I tell you the truth?"

"Seems so. Now the question is, how are we to make money out of this business?"

"You can't do it without me. I know all the particulars."

"Yes; but won't it be hard for you to disprove your connection with the swindlers?"

"Not a bit. I've scarcely been seen with them, and I can swear I was only piping them to gather evidence. The queer part of the affair is—what have they done with Stacy?"

"He has been got rid of, no doubt."

"Yes, I guess so."

"Well, the best thing we can do is to see if we can't claim the reward for catching Notting."

"Yes; but first I must answer this."

He wrote as follows:

"Nottings, father and son, were in Calais this morning. May go to Paris. Madge Gracy has escaped from them with the greater part of the funds."

"Now, I must be off to look for my friends, the Nottings."

"Not so fast. Shall I accompany you?"

"As you wish. Can you leave this place?"

"Yes, in charge of Matilde. She understands the business as well as I do."

"I suppose so. Well, we had better lose no time."

They left the *Maison de Santé*, and by Gaubard's request were driven to his lodgings, which were in a private house not far from the hotel.

"Sit down, Mousset," he said, "while I do a little packing. Here is brandy."

"Thanks. I'll just take a look over the papers."

Gaubard opened the closet and proceeded to bring out his valise and some garments, which he shook out preparatory to folding.

The doctor's back was toward him, and he busily engaged reading the paper, when suddenly a blow on the back of the head felled him to the floor unconscious and covered with blood.

"There!" said Gaubard, drawing off the brass knuckles with which he had inflicted the blow, "I'm even with you, my jayhawk. Now, there is no time to lose."

He completed his packing, thrust his hand in Mousset's pockets, and left the house after handing the key of the room where the doctor lay unconscious to the landlord's daughter.

He did not delay one moment in Calais, but set off for Paris by the first train.

When Madge had secured all her jewels and fine dresses she lost no time in leaving the city, taking the first train at the station. She was a very inexperienced traveler, but her native sharpness stood her in good stead.

"I can't speak French," she said, "so I could easily be traced. I'll leave France with all speed. I'd like to go to New York, but I'm afraid it would be too dangerous."

As she sat in the train, which was bound for Boulogne, she turned to a travelers' guide which she had purchased at the station.

"I have it," she said, to herself. "I'll go to Australia. No one would ever think of looking for me there. The voyage is so long that they will have caught the Nottings, and hanged them, I hope, before I reach land."

Immediately on her arrival at Boulogne she made inquiries and ascertained that a steamer sailed for Sydney, Australia, the following day at noon.

She resolved to keep very quiet, and did not leave her hotel till the hour of departure.

Her ticket had been purchased for her by the hotel-clerk and her luggage sent on board the *Medusa*.

A few minutes before twelve she was safe in her state-room.

The bell rung the signal of departure, and the gang-plank was about to be hauled in when two men hastened on board.

They had evidently decided on their journey at the last moment, and all the luggage they possessed consisted of two satchels carried in their hands.

They entered their names on the purser's book as Mr. Wilson and Mr. Jones.

The men were Jasper Notting and his father!

CHAPTER XL.

FRIENDS IN COUNCIL.

DOCTOR HOWARD arrived in New York some hours before Sam Saunders expected him, and at once sent for the detective.

Sam knew he had a somewhat painful task before him. He must unwillingly be his employer's informant that his cousin had been foully murdered. Not only this, but the doctor must also learn that the man he had searched for so long had been all his life the companion of thieves, his own record being as black as any one among them.

It was a painful task, but Sam Saunders was

accustomed to do his duty manfully, and he told him the story, reserving the fact that the body found in the cat-boat was that of Hearington to the last.

"My cousin that man?" exclaimed the doctor, pale and agitated.

"Yes, I am sorry to say that such is the case."

"Well, as he was a low thief I am glad he no longer lives to disgrace me; but what sort of a girl is his daughter?"

"A lady, and a beautiful one."

"Thank fortune! I was about to say if she resembled her father that I was extremely sorry I had hunted them from obscurity."

"You would indeed have occasion for regret. Fortunately you need be under no apprehension."

"I shall call on her at once. Will you accompany me?"

"With great pleasure."

The moment Frank Howard saw his cousin he was prepossessed in her favor—not only by her remarkable beauty, but also by her manner. She was no longer the spoiled, impulsive child she had once been; sorrow had taught her a valuable lesson. She had learned to control her own feelings and consider those of others.

The detective read Howard's pleasure in forming Hetty's acquaintance in his face.

"Now, Doctor Howard," said the detective, "I must ask you what can I do for Demy?"

"I am very glad that you thought of him. What do you think on the subject, Mr. Saunders?"

"My idea is to send the boy to a good school for some years and then let him choose his own profession."

"You are right. I will invest a sum sufficient for the purpose. He can live on the interest till he is of age, and make use of the principal to go into some suitable business."

"And Mr. Saunders must consent to be his guardian," said Hetty.

"A capital idea. Now, Saunders, you must wire the lawyers in London of the fraud which has been perpetrated."

"I should have done so before had I known their address."

"Yes, it was a stupid oversight on my part neglecting to leave it with you, but none of us foresaw the turn affairs would take."

"Can we do nothing to old Mrs. Notting?" asked Hetty, who could not forgive the terrible old wretch for all she had suffered at her hands, and who also remembered her ill-treatment of the unfortunate Maria.

"She shall be watched, and when we catch her son and grandson we can arrest her on a charge of conspiracy."

"Don't let her escape. She deserves punishment."

"She shall not. Trust me for that."

When all arrangements were made, the night before the departure of the party for Europe, Demy's farewell visit was paid to Hetty.

Sam Saunders had informed him of his good fortune, and he no longer resided with Mrs. Murphy. That worthy old woman had been rewarded for her care of the boy by being set up in a candy and fruit store on Avenue B, where many of her friends resided, and Sam had found a home for Demy in the family of a friend of his who was also on the detective force.

He was clean and well-dressed, and few would have recognized in the sharp-eyed, smart-looking boy, Demy, the ragged waif, whose business was to arouse his better-off neighbors when it was time for them to resume their toil.

He entered the hotel parlor, where the party was assembled, rather bashfully.

"How do you do, Demy?" saluted Hetty, shaking him by the hand. "Frank," she added to her cousin, "this is Demy, my good friend, who was so kind to me and helped me so much."

"How are you, Demy?" saluted the doctor, also shaking hands with the boy, who was trying to think of something to say. "I am glad to make your acquaintance. My cousin, Miss Hearington, has told me so much about you that I feel as if you were an old friend."

"Thank you, sir," said Demy, inwardly abusing himself because his ideas seemed all to have taken flight.

Mrs. Mendal also greeted him cordially, and Sam Saunders, who had accompanied him to the hotel, began to talk on all sorts of subjects, knowing this was the best way of placing the boy at his ease.

Rusty was in the room also, sitting on the edge of his chair and breathing hard. He was wonderfully spruced up, but still retained a hang-dog expression, and was overburdened by the weight of his new-born respectability.

Several times he had been tempted to, in his own vernacular, "hook it," so Sam thought it best to keep an eye on him, and Rusty was virtually a prisoner. The party was slightly incongruous, but all their interests tended the one way, and a sort of sympathy had grown up between them in consequence.

"I wish you to remember me, Demy," said Hetty, taking a place near him. "I may return to New York some day, and I cannot tell

you how happy and proud I should feel to find you a smart and well-to-do man."

"Thank you, miss; I'll try, but I'm skeered that nuthin' 'll ever make me like school."

"No, Demy, I dare say you will not, for I never did; but we would cut a poor figure among other people if we had no education."

In olden days Demy would have been tempted to reply, "Darn education," but he already knew better.

"It may be up-hill work at first," resumed Hetty, "because you are not accustomed to restraint; but the time will soon pass, and you will have reason to rejoice all your life that you studied in your youth."

"Is'pose so, miss; but what I'll hate wuss than p'izon will be not being so fur on in books as smaller boys than me."

"If that is the thought that worries you," interposed Frank Howard, who was an attentive listener to the conversation, "we can easily remedy that. I shall empower Mr. Lownes to find you a teacher who will come to the house and teach you privately till you are far advanced enough to go to school. Then I think you will prefer the companionship of others."

"Thank you, sir," said Demy, gratefully, and he then took leave of the party and returned to his home, where he was made thoroughly comfortable by Mr. and Mrs. Lownes, who were a childless couple.

CHAPTER XLI.

SAM ON A HOT TRAIL.

NEXT day the strangely assorted set of travelers left New York on board the steamer *Servia* for Liverpool.

Hetty proved herself an excellent sailor, and Sam Saunders was also, so the two were frequently together on deck while Mrs. Mendal was below. Rusty felt more at home forward among the steerage passengers than in company with those whom he classed indiscriminately together as "doods."

Doctor Howard found congenial company, but nevertheless bestowed much attention on his youthful cousin. His sharp eyes had detected the fact that Sam Saunders had lost his heart to Hetty, but with Old World pride he did not approve.

He tried to hint gently to Sam that his love for Hetty was somewhat misplaced.

The detective understood his drift at once.

"I know what you mean, doctor," said he, quietly; "you consider me beneath Miss Hearington; so I am, no doubt, but all the same, before I go back to New York, I shall tell her I love her."

"She is too young, Saunders."

The doctor's tone was rather cold. He thought Sam showed presumption.

"She is very young, no doubt; but she knows her own heart and mind. If she says 'No,' I am man enough to take my answer, but I don't mind telling you that I hope she won't say it."

"Her position?"

"Yes, sir; no doubt she might look a great deal higher than a plain United States detective, but Hetty is American and don't build so high on class as some people do."

"We shall see. Her first cousin, Sir Ashley Hearington, is a very fine young man, and their marriage would unite the title and fortune as they should be united. Excuse me if I speak plainly, Saunders, but I must tell the truth. I do not consider you an equal match for Miss Hearington."

After this conversation Sam had few opportunities of speaking with Hetty, for the doctor kept near her till the end of the voyage.

They arrived in London and went directly to the doctor's home. The lawyers were notified of their arrival, and properly flustered the two worthy old gentlemen were.

They had not dared to cable the sale of *Clanmuir*, and were deeply distressed, not knowing how the real heir would bear the news of their unpardonable blunder.

Early the next morning, as they sat in their office in Old Jury, a carriage drew up at the door and a clerk announced: "Miss Hearington and party."

The partners rose simultaneously and faced their visitors with grave dignity, though they keenly felt their position.

"Ah! gentlemen," said Frank Howard, coming forward with extended hand, "I am afraid you will feel as if I had acted very stupidly in not warning you of the impostors who have already visited you."

"How are you, doctor?" replied Mr. Sheffield; "your omission has certainly placed us in a sad predicament. You are aware, I presume, that *Clanmuir* is no longer in our hands?"

The doctor looked startled.

"I was not, certainly. This is Miss Hearington!"

The partners bowed profoundly.

"Her father?" said Mr. Sheffield, interrogatively.

"Is dead. Well, what has become of *Clanmuir*?"

"Be seated, ladies and gentlemen," said Mr. Grube, bowing to Sam Saunders, Mrs. Mendal and Rusty, and feeling profoundly puzzled by the appearance of the last-named gentleman.

"I negotiated a sale of the estate to Sir Ashley Hearington."

"And the purchase-money?"

"Was paid to Mrs. James Elkington, who so cleverly personated Miss Hearington."

Doctor Howard looked blank.

"The moment we received your dispatch we wired the police in France, where the swindlers now are, to arrest them. We also received two dispatches from a man in Calais who signs himself Gaubard."

Sam Saunders started.

"On the subject of the swindlers?" asked the doctor, impatiently.

"Yes; he claims that he has information of their movements. Here are his dispatches."

"I know the man," interposed Sam; "he is from New York and knows the whole story."

Doctor Howard ran his eye hastily over the telegram.

"This Notting," he said, looking up, "is the murderer of Mr. Hearington."

"Great heavens!"

"He is, and that is how he came in possession of his papers."

"And the woman?"

"Merely an accomplice."

Sam Saunders was thinking deeply; he had read the dispatches and the thing that puzzled him was the evident anxiety of Gaubard to keep the lawyers informed of the movements of the swindlers.

Why had not the Frenchman accompanied Madge in her flight?

Perhaps these messages were sent to confuse the English authorities. Somehow, Sam thought not. Something told him they were genuine. Gaubard said the gang had quarreled, and when rogues quarrel honest people get their rights. It was quite possible that the artful Frenchman had failed in his attempt to force the Nottings to share with him the plunder, and now was ready to treat with other parties and obtain a reward for betraying his partners in villainy.

"Doctor," said Sam, "don't you think I had better start at once and catch them before they leave France?"

"I do; but I fear they have already left."

"We sent a man who bears a very high reputation from Scotland Yard," announced Mr. Sheffield, rather stiffly.

"No doubt; but this gentleman is the detective who has discovered the whole business. He had scarcely anything to guide him and has succeeded where no other man could."

Sam was pleased to hear this tribute to his skill, particularly from the doctor, who he knew was rather angry with him on account of his attentions to Hetty.

"Oh! Under those circumstances," said Mr. Sheffield, "of course I leave the matter entirely in your hands. I have heard a great deal of the surprising skill of the American detectives."

"We have some smart men among us," Sam remarked, modestly; "but now, doctor, will you excuse me if I mention that there is no time to lose?"

"Certainly I will. Be off, Saunders! Want any money?"

"No, sir; nothing but those two telegrams, or copies of them."

They were handed to him, and with a bow to the whole company and a parting glance at Hetty the detective was gone.

"Our man has not yet communicated with us," said the lawyer; "but we furnished him with the address given by this Gaubard, and no doubt he will cooperate with the American to their mutual benefit."

"If he is one-half as smart as Saunders, we may consider their success assured," said the doctor, whose attention was now attracted to Rusty, who was staring around him in an extraordinary manner. He looked so strange and wild that the two lawyers drew away, murmuring: "Dear me!" in an alarmed manner.

"Oh, Rusty," cried Howard, feeling secretly amused, "I forgot that you did not know Burchall was Sam Saunders."

"Yes, you forgot," replied Rusty, sarcastically; "an' I s'pose you call this a square game to play onto a cove?"

"You may take my word for your entire safety. Sam Saunders is an honorable man and will injure no one."

"Yes, Rusty," added Mrs. Mendal, "you surely know you can trust me, and I assure you you are safe."

"Well, you might ha' told a cove," grumbled the crook, rubbing his two hands together and looking down at his boots in his old hang-dog fashion.

"Now, Rusty," said Hetty, laying her small, gloved hand on his shoulder, "you know if we had told you, you would not have come with us at all."

"That's so, miss, an' I s'pose it's all right, but a chill did run acrost my insides when I heard that name."

"It is all right, and you shall have the pleasure of seeing Notting brought to justice," said Howard, cheerfully. "Now, gentlemen, we will not detain you longer. If you hear any news, let us know."

They returned to the doctor's house and Mrs. Mendal took Rusty out to see the sights. She knew he was restless in the house and she wished to reassure him on the subject of the dreaded Sam Saunders.

After luncheon, as Doctor Howard sat conversing with Hetty, the footman presented a card.

"Is the gentleman waiting?" asked the doctor.

"Yes, sir."

"Then show him in."

A tall, dark man entered and greeted the doctor warmly.

"Miss Hearington," said Howard, "allow me to present to you Sir Ashley Hearington."

Hetty bowed, but Sir Ashley held out his hand.

"We are cousins, you know," he said, pleasantly, "and must not fail to become good friends."

"You did not meet the spurious cousin, I suppose, Hearington?"

"No; by the way, Howard, what about that sale?"

Seeing Howard's look of annoyance, the baronet turned to Hetty without awaiting an answer. He began asking her all sorts of questions, skillfully evading anything that might distress her, as he had learned her sad story from the lawyer.

The doctor saw with much satisfaction that Hetty had made a deep impression on Sir Ashley, and only hoped he would favorably impress her.

The baronet was singularly handsome, dark as a Spaniard, and a brilliant conversationalist, and surely Hetty, who had met so few gentlemen, would be struck with admiration of his many charms of mind and person.

He paid a long visit, and before he left invited his cousin to his house in town.

"My mother will call," he said, as he shook hands with Hetty, "and you must dine with us. The season is nearly over, but there are a few nice people in town."

"Thank you, Sir Ashley," said Hetty, with quiet dignity, "but my father's death is so very recent that I prefer to keep quiet for a short time."

"Oh! yes, certainly. Excuse me," stammered Sir Ashley, who was surprised that this little half-savage, as he inwardly termed her, should have so much regard for the *biensance* of society.

"What do you think of him?" asked the doctor, as the door closed on Sir Ashley.

"He is handsome, and means to be pleasant, but he has lived in a different world from mine, and I never could feel at home with him."

Alas! for the doctor's schemes! There was no sympathy between them!

CHAPTER XLII.

THE MAN WITH A BROKEN HEAD.

THE proprietor of the *Maison de Santé* did not recover his senses till darkness had closed around him. His head ached terribly and he was alone in a strange place.

He began slowly to remember what had transpired before he was struck down by Gaubard's treacherous blow, and putting up his hand, felt a deep wound on which a clot of blood had hardened. He rose, but was thankful to find a chair, in which he sank, and for a moment a feeling of extreme weakness overpowered him.

"I am still in that villain's room," he said, and felt in his pocket for a match.

Fortunately for him, he found several, and striking one, he saw a decanter of brandy on a stand close by. He succeeded in his attempt to reach it and drained it dry.

He next lit the gas and sat down for a moment to recover himself, for the least motion brought on a sensation of faintness that alarmed him.

"That cowardly hound!" he said, bitterly. "To treat me so."

A pool of blood on the carpet told him the cause of his extreme weakness, and a feeling of apprehension came over him as he hastily reflected that his skull might be fractured. A bell-rope hung near him and he pulled it with all his strength.

The girl who attended the lodgers' rooms stood gossiping with a companion from next door when the clang of the bell called her back to her duties.

"Ma foi!" she cried, indignantly; "one never has a moment's peace."

Again the bell rung loudly, and she lifted her eyes to the row as she laid down the neck-ribbon she had been examining.

"Why, by the blessed saints!" she said, while her red cheeks grew pale, "that room is empty! The monsieur is gone, and the key is in my pocket."

"His ghost must be there, then," retorted her friend, laughingly.

"Hush, Cecile!" pleaded Nanette. "Oh! come with me, for by the bones of St. Peter, I would not go up alone."

She crossed herself, being as devout as she was lazy.

"Not me," demurred the heartless Cecile, "I must away."

"Now, Cecile," implored Nanette, as the bell continued to ring, "come with me. You know what a Jew, mule, Barbary ape, pig and villain my father is. If I do not see what the trouble is he will murder me."

"Maybe this monsieur of yours has murdered some one in his room," suggested Cecile, maliciously.

Her friend uttered a shriek.

"There was another with him," she cried, "one who ascended, but did not go forth."

"Didn't I tell you so? He has murdered him."

Nanette was trembling from head to foot, while her friend added to her terror every moment by suggesting fresh horrors, when the doorkeeper appeared.

To him Nanette related her story and the bell rung again while she did so.

"Bring the light, girl," said the man, roughly, "and give me the key."

Cecile willingly accompanied her friend now out of curiosity, and the two girls went up together, clinging to each other, while the candle Nanette carried bobbed from side to side in her trembling hand.

The man thrust the key in the lock while the bell, which Mouset continued to ring, echoed through the house.

The door opened and to Nanette's surprise there sat a pale, wild-looking man, whose garments were blood-stained, and who cried:

"I've been almost murdered. Go for the police!"

As he uttered the words his strength failed him and he sunk into the crimson pool at his feet.

The police came, an ambulance was called, and Mouset was carried off to a hospital. Here he remained for ten days in high fever, knowing no one and raving wildly, sometimes in English, sometimes in French, but always on the same subject—of the man who had treacherously felled him down by a cowardly blow.

When he recovered his senses he found out that Gaubard had added robbery to the assault, and curses loud and long were on his lips during his waking hours. The nurses were horrified that a man who was scarcely out of the grasp of death could use such language, and were glad when he was strong enough to leave the hospital.

He returned to his home in no pleasant humor, and the first news he heard lent fuel to the fire of his wrath.

A detective from London had visited the house during his absence and Matilde had informed him that her master had gone to Paris in company with the sender of the telegrams about which he had come to inquire.

"Blue lightning! you old hag!" shouted the doctor. "Your infernal swine of a nephew almost murdered me. Herobbed me, do you hear, you queen of all the witches?"

The old woman shrugged her shoulders. She was accustomed to the doctor, who at length grew calm when he found it was useless to do otherwise.

Sam Saunders arrived on the very day of the doctor's return. He had some difficulty in obtaining admittance to the *Maison de Santé*, but he was resolute and at length succeeded.

The doctor told his story, painting Gaubard in the darkest colors. Sam saw the situation at once. The one who held the purchase-money of Clannuir was Madge, and she must be overtaken without delay. Gaubard would follow Notting like a sleuth-hound on account of the reward. To trace Madge's progress was to Sam an easy task. He spoke French like a native, and Madge's ignorance of that language had attracted attention and caused her actions to be marked.

CHAPTER XLIII.

SAM SEES AUSTRALIA.

THE American detective followed her to Boulogne, and learned that she had sailed for Australia on board the *Medusa*. No vessel would leave for Sydney for two weeks, but the aid of the magic wire was invoked, and Saunders returned to England and sailed for Melbourne the day after.

"They have ten days' start of me," said he, "but I've notified the police at Sydney that the fair one is on her way."

He did not delay in London long enough to have an interview with Howard. The Go-as-you-please Detective was on his mettle.

"I'm glad that Scotland Yard man is on a side-track," he said; "I'll let them see what a real born Yankee can do."

The English detective, led astray by the information obtained at the *Maison de Santé*, was hunting two Frenchmen, for Matilde had given him the same information her master had given her, viz.: that he was going away with Gaubard for an indefinite period.

Sam duly arrived in Melbourne, and without wasting a moment set off for Sydney. He found the steamer agent, and learned that the *Medusa* had arrived three days before.

"How many lady passengers did you have?" he asked, carelessly.

"Not one."

"What?"

The agent seemed surprised.

"We had no lady passengers this trip," he said.

"May I see your list?"

Sam was nonplused. The list was handed to him.

"Why, here!" he exclaimed, thrusting it under the agent's nose.

The man looked and read the name:

"Mrs. Susanne Harper."

"Oh! yes," he said, "that's so, but that lady did not land. I saw the passengers come ashore; she must have changed her mind and remained in France."

Sam felt baffled. He bade the agent good-day, and went to the detective bureau to which he had called.

The chief was in. Sam did not like the look of him. His face was too foxy, and he looked to our keen-eyed man-hunter as if he had his price.

No lady had landed from the Medusa. Had any lady sailed from Boulogne on her? The chief could not tell. He seemed very indifferent about the whole business.

"I don't wonder criminals escape if this is the way the Australian and English detectives act," said Saunders, indignantly.

"Oh! it is no use to bluster," replied the chief, impudently. "If you have gone round the world on a false scent, it is no one's fault but your own."

"I have yet to learn that I am mistaken, and I don't intend to take the lesson from you," said Sam, taking up his hat. "I see it was money thrown away to wire you, but I am not beaten yet for all that."

"Some people don't know when they are beaten."

The chief fancied he was very sarcastic.

"Those are the people who have the element of success in them," replied Sam, coolly.

"Good-day, Mr. Inspector; I guess I won't require your services. Come over to New York and study your business."

"Get out of my office," roared the inspector, crimson with rage.

"Certainly. Might as well; no one will ever learn much by stopping in it."

With this parting shot Sam hastened away. He felt terribly discouraged, but he would not admit the fact. If the Medusa had not sailed he would have gone on board and tried to pick up some information, but she had been overdue on her last voyage and made no delay in port.

"I'll see if I can't find some of the passengers," said Sam, and he made a close canvas of the hotels. No one knew anything about the vessel in any of the first-class houses, so the lodging-houses came next.

After going through half-a-dozen, Sam found one where a man who had crossed the ocean in the Medusa lodged. He was a poor man and he was ill in bed.

"Are you a friend?" asked the landlady. "Because Mr. Ryan is queer and don't like strangers."

"Yes, I am a friend," said Sam, readily.

"Very well; walk in."

Sam Saunders did so, and closed the door in the landlady's face. She went down-stairs grumbling very much at his want of good manners.

Mr. Ryan was a young man who appeared to be in the last stage of consumption, and his big hollow eyes were full of suspicion and animosity as the detective came forward saying:

"Pardon my intrusion, I beg. I would not have forced myself on you if I had known any other method of gaining the information I want."

"What may that be?" asked the sick man.

"You were a passenger by the steamer, Medusa?"

"Yes."

The answer was given in a tone that made it sound like:

"What is that to you?"

"Well, I am in search of the lady who sailed with you from France."

Ryan's eyes opened wider than ever.

"I came all the way from New York in search of her."

"Well, you'll have to go a good deal further before you find her," returned the invalid, in a strange manner.

"What do you mean?"

"You have come around the world, but you'll have to go further still."

"I don't understand you. Do you know where she is?"

"I do."

"If you tell me as quickly as you can I'll be obliged. I must find her at once."

"Then go and look for her where she is, and not here."

"Where is she?"

"Dead and buried in mid-ocean!"

CHAPTER XLIV.

A DEATH-BED AT SEA.

It was two days after the steamer left France before Madge dressed and went on deck. A curious feeling had come over her which

she did not understand. A sort of mist seemed ever before her eyes, and a humming noise in her ears. She had always been exceedingly healthy, and it never occurred to her that this condition was the premonition of a serious illness. She dressed languidly, and took her place among the passengers assembled on deck. She had worn a thick veil when she came on board, but her face was bare now, for she hoped the cool breeze would drive away the cloud that seemed before her, and along with it the tired, weak feeling, so new to her.

Two men were near her when she took her seat in a chair which a gentleman rose to offer her.

She did not observe them, but they recognized her in a moment.

"Jasper," cried Notting, "don't turn your head, for pity's sake. There is Madge!"

They hurried away to discuss the new turn in affairs, and argued long and earnestly as to the best course to pursue.

While they puzzled their brains about Madge, she, on her part, created a sensation among the passengers by starting up and gesticulating violently, while she called at the top of her voice to some imaginary person whom she fancied to be pursuing her.

The terrified men around her thought she was a madwoman, but the ship's doctor approached her and gently laid his hand upon her arm.

"What is wrong?" he asked, in a soothing tone. "Come with me, Mrs. Harper."

Madge brushed her hand across her eyes, and regarded him with a frightened look.

"Harper?" she said, slowly, as if trying to recollect something; "my name is not Harper. I am Madge Stacy, and I live at — Thirty-fifth street, New York."

"Well, come below."

The doctor placed his arm about her and drew her gently down to her state-room, where the services of the stewardess were called for. The woman kindly undressed her, and she was laid in her berth, raving wildly in a raging fever.

The news soon passed through the ship, and Notting took advantage of the opportunity to interview the captain and state his case.

"This lady," said he, "is my son's wife. For some days before we sailed her strange conduct filled us with apprehension. She insisted that she must make a long voyage. I wished to call in medical aid; but my son has been in the habit of deferring to his wife in everything, and she was so opposed to the idea that the mere mention of a doctor drove her wild. We did not know what to do, and she became violently agitated if we even tried to accompany her anywhere. I followed her, however, wherever she went. In this way we came on board just after she did, and kept a watchful eye on her."

The captain looked surprised and somewhat incredulous.

"The lady is now in the doctor's hands," he said, "and I will not allow her to be disturbed."

"Certainly not," replied Notting; "but I must ask you to take charge of a large sum of money which she has on her person. We sold a valuable property, and my son's wife obtained possession of the money."

"You should have stated your case sooner," replied the captain, sternly; "now that the lady is unconscious how do I know whether you are any relation to her or not? I shall protect her till she comes to her senses."

"And take care of the money?" pleaded Notting.

"And take care of the money."

He bowed his head, as if to intimate the interview was at an end, as he repeated the words.

The captain did not believe in the Nottings.

Madge continued to rave and the fever continued to rage for five days. Then she woke up from a stupor which had lasted some hours.

Awoke only to die!

She gazed around at the stewardess and the doctor who sat with a grave face counting the feeble pulse flickering at the thin white wrist.

"Where am I?" she whispered, faintly.

"At sea, on board the Medusa."

"Yes, I remember. What is the matter with me?"

"Fever."

The doctor's face told its story, and Madge realized the truth.

"Shall I get well?" was the next question.

"While there is life there is hope," answered the doctor, evasively.

"But you don't think I will," replied his patient, calmly.

"I fear not."

"Then give me brandy, champagne, anything to give me a little strength."

Her request was complied with at once.

The doctor gave her iced champagne, as much as she could drink.

"Now," said she, fresh vigor coming back with the false strength lent by the wine coursing through her veins, "I've got work to do. Where is the captain?"

The stewardess went to call him, and he obeyed the summons immediately.

"Captain," said Madge, as soon as the sun-burned, kindly-faced man was near her.

"Yes, madam."

"I have something to do," she said, her thin fingers picking restlessly at the bed-clothing.

"May I ask where you parted from your husband?" asked the sailor, who was fair-play personified, and felt he must give the Nottings a chance to prove the truth of their story.

"In France," she said, looking astonished.

"Then he is on board and wishes to see you."

Madge did not feel greatly astonished.

"I'll see him," she said, in a low tone. "Is his father with him?"

"Yes."

"Then don't let him come near me. He tried to have me put in an insane asylum."

She was growing weak again and signed to the doctor who gave her more champagne. The captain began to think Notting's story was true. He went for Jasper, who entered the cabin where his wife lay dying.

"Jasper," she said, as he took her hand.

"Why didn't you let me know you were on board?"

"I was afraid you were angry."

"I have no time to be angry," she said, with a sad smile; "may I see my husband alone?" she added.

"Certainly. Give her that whenever she needs it," said the doctor, pointing to the wine, and leaving the cabin in company with the others.

"Jasper," said Madge, "you have been kinder to me than any one but my poor father, and I want to tell you what I think had best be done."

"Yes."

He looked uncomfortable.

"I left Gaubard shut up in the mad-house where he tried to place me, and paid that doctor to keep him there."

"You did?"

"Yes; let him stay; he deserves it. Now what you must do is to find Chamberlain's daughter, tell her the truth, and give her the money I have around my waist. I've spent very little of it. Will you do this?"

She fixed her eyes, from which the sight was fast fading, on his.

He shifted uneasily, but replied:

"I promise."

"You are not religious," she said, in a reflective tone, "neither am I. I wish I was, but it is too late. I think though that you will respect a promise made to the dead."

"Of course."

"Then remember, you have promised me to restore Chamberlain's daughter to her rights."

"I will."

"Then call the doctor; I think I am going fast."

Husband and wife met no more.

Next day at sunset Madge's body was consigned to the deep.

CHAPTER XLV.

A FEARFUL CLOSING SCENE.

"DEAD and buried in mid-ocean!" exclaimed Sam, in amazement mingled with a baffled feeling.

"Yes; I saw her body consigned to the waves."

"It was sad, though she was a wicked woman, for her to die at sea—alone."

Ryan looked surprised, and a shade of obstinacy came over his wan face which the detective did not fail to mark.

"Very," he said, dryly.

"Something tells me that you know more about this woman. You are defeating the cause of justice if you do and remain silent."

"I don't know who you are, nor what you want to learn. The woman is dead. Whatever her crimes may have been she is beyond what you term justice."

"I am a detective, and I am on the track of a cowardly murderer, who not only killed a man, but robbed and defrauded his daughter."

"But what had the woman to do with it?"

"She was the accomplice of the murderer and the wife of his son."

Ryan's face had undergone a change.

"I certainly will not be a party to any wrongdoing," he said, gravely, "and if you will tell me the whole story I'll do my best to assist you."

Sam hated the delay, but he must humor the invalid if he wished to obtain any information from him, so he sat down and repeated the oft-told tale.

Ryan was touched by the story. He no longer regarded the detective with aversion.

"I have always had a prejudice against men of your profession; but I'll do my best to help you; for, after all, a murderer, like Notting, should not go unpunished."

"You know something of him, then?"

"I do. He and his son came over on the Medusa."

"They did? Then they are in Sydney?"

"I can't tell you that, for I don't know; but I'll tell you the strange circumstances of the voyage."

He did so and Sam listened with close atten-

tion. It was fortunate he had met this man, otherwise he would have been at a dead standstill, believing that the Nottings and Madge had parted company.

"And they said she was out of her mind, but had a very large sum of money with her?"

"Yes; the captain did not believe them, and if she had not recovered her senses would not have allowed them to see her, or touch the money till they proved their claim on it."

"But, as it happened, they obtained possession of it?"

"Yes."

"Well, I believe I am as well pleased. I thought the party had split, and as I could not follow both, I'd leave the murderer to the Scotland Yard man. Now I'm afraid he'll be out in the cold."

"I guess you ain't very sorry for that," said the sick man, with a smile.

"Not very," replied Sam; "but now I must be off. Let me reward you for the information you have given me; it is most valuable."

"I don't want any reward for telling the truth," he said, but his eyes were fixed wistfully on the well-filled pocketbook which Sam drew from his pocket.

"Never mind that," replied the detective; "the English lawyers offer the reward, and they are well able to pay it."

He laid down a twenty-pound note and put on his hat.

"If I succeed I shall send your name and address to Messrs. Sheffield & Grube," he said; "the reward shall be divided between yourself and any others who may help me."

With a cordial good-by he left Ryan, who was exceedingly thankful for the timely assistance.

"Now for a hunt," exclaimed the Go-As-You-Please Detective, as he stepped out briskly. "The question is where shall I start from?"

He determined he would ask for no assistance from the incompetent and ungentlemanly inspector, so he strolled into a saloon.

Jasper Notting in all probability retained his old habits and was a frequenter of such places. Before many hours Sam had visited nearly every saloon in the city, and his good-natured, easy manner led to his obtaining all the information he sought. That night he took the boat for Newcastle, from which point he proceeded inland to Tamworth.

"Now, unless they have gone into the bush, I've got them," he decided, and set out to explore the town.

With little difficulty he trailed his men, but they had left Tamworth the evening before for Swamp Oak. "They are skeered and have taken to the bush," Sam remarked, and hired a horse and guide to follow them.

For fifteen miles through the bush, under the blazing Australian sun, the plucky thief-catcher rode, and then his labors were successful.

A few inquiries resulted in his learning that two strange men were at the only place in Swamp Oak which rejoiced in the name hotel.

Of course Saunders had not neglected to provide himself with a warrant for the apprehension of Henry and Jasper Notting, for the willful murder of Rupert Hearington, better known as Hugh Chamberlain, on the 26th or 27th of September, 18—, in the Harbor of New York City.

After ascertaining that his revolver was ready to his hand, Sam walked into the bar.

The clerk of the hotel stood near the door engaged in conversation with a man who turned around and disclosed the features of Jasper Notting!

Sam advanced and laid his hand on the young man's shoulder. "Dead to rights, Jasper!" he said, and before Jasper had time to utter a word the handcuffs were on his wrists.

Jasper did not know Saunders, and exclaimed: "What do you mean? You mistake your man! I'm a stranger here!"

"So am I," suggested Sam; "I'm all the way from New York—Sam Saunders, of the United States detective force. Yes, Jasper Notting, I've hunted you around the world."

He drew the warrant from his pocket, but Jasper had weakened at the very sound of the name which was literally a terror to evil-doers.

"I told the old man so," he muttered.

"Now, Jasper," resumed Sam, pleasantly, while a crowd of rough-looking men stood staring at himself and his prisoner. "Let me see your father."

"You won't get much good of him," said the dutiful son, "he is dying by inches."

"What's the matter?"

Sam would have been less than a detective if a shade of disappointment had not appeared on his face.

"Why, coming out to this forsaken place his horse fell lame and he got off to lead him. He didn't know the bush was full of snakes till a big diamond snake fastened on his leg. He's been drinking whisky by the quart, but it don't seem to help, and the doctor says a few hours will settle him. Come along and see him. I don't want you to take my word for it."

In an upper room Henry Notting lay on his death-bed. He was in a sort of daze when Sam entered, accompanied by Jasper. Notting started up with wildly staring eyes, when the door opened, and Sam saw that the son had told the

truth. The hunted murderer recognized Saunders in a moment.

"So you've come to hunt me down, curse you!" he shouted, and thrust his hand beneath his pillow. Sam sprung forward and dashed up the revolver in time to send the bullet through the ceiling.

He disarmed the dying murderer, and calmly sat down near the bed.

Notting made a movement as if to spring on him, but fell back exhausted, breathing curses through his foam-flecked lips. He was suffering tortures; the limb which bore the marks of the deadly serpent's fangs had swollen to an enormous size, and became turgid and black as ink, showing that gangrene was already far advanced.

Notting's hours were numbered, and all that remained was to wait for the end to come.

Listening to the fearful imprecations which flowed from the lips of the dying murderer, it seemed like a mockery to talk of a clergyman, but the landlord had sent for one. He soon arrived, and pleaded earnestly with the hardened wretch to confess his crimes and beg for mercy, and if possible make his peace with an offended God.

In vain!

"I'll die as I lived," he said; "I want no parsons whining around me—no psalm-singing or prayers. Clear out! Jasper, bring me brandy."

The shocked and frightened clergyman withdrew from the room, remaining in the house, however, in case the dying man should change his mind.

He did not, but died as he lived, though Jasper induced him to confess that his was the hand that fired the fatal bullets.

He was the acknowledged murderer of Chamberlain.

"I've got all the papers and nearly all the money," said Jasper, "and if you'll believe me, Mr. Saunders, I'm glad you came."

"Yes, you craven cur!" snarled his father, who was no longer able to shout out his curses, but lay hissing them forth. "You have been wanting to give yourself up, like the cowardly fool that you are."

"Madge made me promise when she was dying," said Jasper, humbly.

"Yes; and you were afraid of her ghost, you besotted ass. Do you hear that?" turning to Sam; "he thought he saw spirits, the fool! If I had lived I'd never have been taken, but that white-livered hound hasn't got as much pluck as his old grandmother."

It is worse than useless to dwell on the death-bed scene; enough to say that at sunset Notting fell into a stupor from which he never awoke. The funeral took place in a few hours, and immediately after Saunders started for the coast with his prisoner.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE GO-AS-YOU-PLEASE DETECTIVE'S REWARD.

JASPER had handed over all the money in his possession, and also all the papers by means of which they had carried out their conspiracy.

As he was not the actual murderer, the detective promised him that he would endeavor to employ the best counsel for him, and that his sentence should be as light as possible, considering the nature of the crime to which he was accessory.

Of course Notting's confession would have been worthless had it not been made in the presence of the landlord, who was a magistrate; but Sam had been careful to observe all forms, and Jasper felt grateful to him, and behaved so well during the voyage to England that few suspected the true character of the two travelers.

Sam's first interview in London was with the lawyers, who were delighted to find that so large a portion of the purchase-money of Clanmuir was restored to them.

"The sale of the estate must be declared off," said Mr. Sheffield, "for it was not authorized by the real heiress. Sir Ashley's money must be returned to him."

"Wouldn't it be well to consult Miss Hearington?" asked the detective.

"Of course we shall do so. I hear, however, that a very happy settlement of the difficulty is likely to be arranged."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, very suitable also. A marriage engagement, it is said, is soon to be announced between Miss Hearington and Sir Ashley. Very suitable."

"Very."

Sam's tone was somewhat dry, but he said no more, except to give the address of Mr. Ryan, of Sydney, Australia, who, he stated, was entitled to the reward offered for Notting's apprehension.

His time was short, so he called next at Doctor Howard's house in Russell Square.

The doctor was not at home, but Miss Hearington was, and as soon as she received Sam's card, requested the footman to show him in.

Sam walked in, and found Hetty looking lovelier than ever. She received him with a smile and a blush which gladdened his heart.

"I called before leaving England, Miss Hearington," he said, "to say farewell and report the results of my visit to Australia."

"You have been successful, of course?"

"Thank you for your good opinion. Yes, I have succeeded."

"I knew you would be when the English officer came back to say he could learn nothing."

Sam then related the story of his search for the Nottings. Hetty listened with deep interest. She shed a few tears when the detective told her how Notting had confessed the murder of her father, and expressed a wish to know the fate of Jasper.

"He deserves punishment," she said, "he is such a mean, heartless wretch, and was so cruel to his unfortunate mother."

"He shall not escape," declared Sam; "and now, before I go, may I take the liberty of congratulating you on the happy event which is soon to take place?"

"What happy event?" asked Hetty, opening her eyes very wide.

"Your marriage to Sir Ashley."

"I am not going to marry Sir Ashley."

"I heard that the engagement was soon to be made public, and my informant considered the match a most suitable one."

"So he may; but I shall take the liberty of pleasing myself."

Hetty spoke with spirit, and a most pronounced blush mantled her fair face.

Sam was silent. He longed to ask the question which was in his heart, but dreaded an adverse answer.

Hetty sat playing with a paper-cutter, and looking shy and embarrassed. At length the detective rose to go.

"Miss Hetty, I shall not see you again before I sail. Let me wish you all health and happiness. I hope your future life may be so blessed that you will forget the darkness and sorrow of the past—"

When he got thus far, he found Hetty was crying, and, somehow or other, the next thing they knew they were clasped in each other's arms.

Hetty confessed that the thought of parting with Sam forever almost broke her heart, and Sam assured Hetty that if he had lost her he would not have wanted to live any longer. When matters had been so far arranged, Doctor Howard walked in, and, of course, was informed of the state of affairs.

He was displeased, and did not make much effort to conceal his displeasure.

"I've given you my opinion on this subject," he said to the detective, coldly.

"Yes, sir," replied Sam; "but I prefer Hetty's opinion to that of others."

"Hetty is too young to know her own mind."

"You would not have thought so if I had accepted Sir Ashley's proposal," replied Hetty, indignantly.

"That was a suitable match; you then would have married in your own circle."

"So is this suitable, for it suits me, and I certainly am the person most concerned," answered Hetty, with spirit, and that settled it.

"Well, you are your own mistress. Do as you please," the doctor had to say.

"Now, Cousin Frank, be your own amiable self; you know I was not brought up among lords and ladies and don't feel at home among them. I prefer one of my own countrymen as a husband. Come! give your consent."

The doctor, who had grown fond of the girl, softened.

"I hope," he said, turning to Sam somewhat stiffly, "that you do not expect to marry this silly girl out of hand!"

"Certainly not. I shall go to New York and bring my career as a detective to a close, then return for my wife."

So it was arranged. Hetty did not wish to take Clanmuir away from her cousin, who therefore retained it.

The trial of Jasper Notting was a short one, and his sentence of six years in State's Prison none too severe.

His grandmother did not long survive the death of Hank Notting and the public exposure of his notorious crimes. Jasper is serving out his term and promises to amend when he is free, but no one puts much confidence in his promises; he is one of the bad ones who can't be good out of prison.

Rusty, the rogue, decided to remain in London and lead an honest life, Mrs. Mendal granting him a pension on that condition. Sam Saunders shipped his old friend Spot to him by a careful hand. It may be possible for man and dog to walk in quiet, respectable paths, but don't expect too much of such human and brute nature.

Demy is making great progress under a painstaking teacher, and bids fair to become a real "clipper"—another Sam Saunders, for he is determined to join the detective force as soon as he is qualified.

The trial over, Sam sailed for England, and when he returns will bring his fair bride with him. His home is ready for them and he anticipates an easy life for the rest of his days with no more hunts around the world as the Go-As-You-Please Detective.

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